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MYTH AND TRAGEDY:

REPRESENTATIONS OF JOAN OF ARC IN FILM AND TWENTIETH CENTURY THEATRE

by

Sara Gwenllian Jones

A thesis submitted to the University of Bristol in accordance with the requirements for the degree of Ph.D in the Faculty of Arts, Department of Drama: Theatre, Film, Television, July 1997.

ABSTRACT

This study considers the processes by which film and play-texts engage with the mythic figure of Joan of Arc. Chapter One provides an overview of the vast body of work that has been inspired by Joan's history. Chapter Two addresses the tragic configuration of Joan's story, especially with regard to ethical conflict and culpability. In Chapter Three, I discuss the displacement of notions of innocence onto Joan's virginity, youth, illiteracy, and rusticity and examine the ideologically-loaded textual constructions and uses of these elements of her myth. Chapter Four is a consideration of her textually-constructed exclusion from the ordinary run of humanity and of the implications of her strangeness and estrangement. Chapter Five is focused upon representations of Joan's condemnation trial. I consider the processes of narrativisation by which means documentary records become historical accounts. I consider fictional reenactments of Joan's trial as 'texts within texts,' engaged in a double process of interrogation which allows Joan to be both persecuted for her transgressiveness and elevated to the status of a saint. Chapter Six examines the central importance of Joan's transgressiveness, exploring the disciplinary strategies employed by a variety of film and play texts as they attempt to counter her troublesome ambiguousness, to identify and define her, and to effect her epistemological assimilation. Chapter Seven is a consideration of the similarities and differences between the myths of Joan of Arc and of Christ and their representation in film. It explores the semantic association between transgression and transcendence, between the 'unnatural' and the 'supernatural,' with regard to their crucial relation to the limits of discourse and epistemology. In Chapter Eight, I explore myth as a discursive practice and examine the operations of myth and of ideology in relation to the obsessive cultural reiteration of the myth of Joan of Arc.

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LIST OF ILLUSTRATIONS

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This thesis is dedicated to my parents. Their love and support has been invaluable throughout and it is their commitment which has made this project possible. I love you more than I can say.

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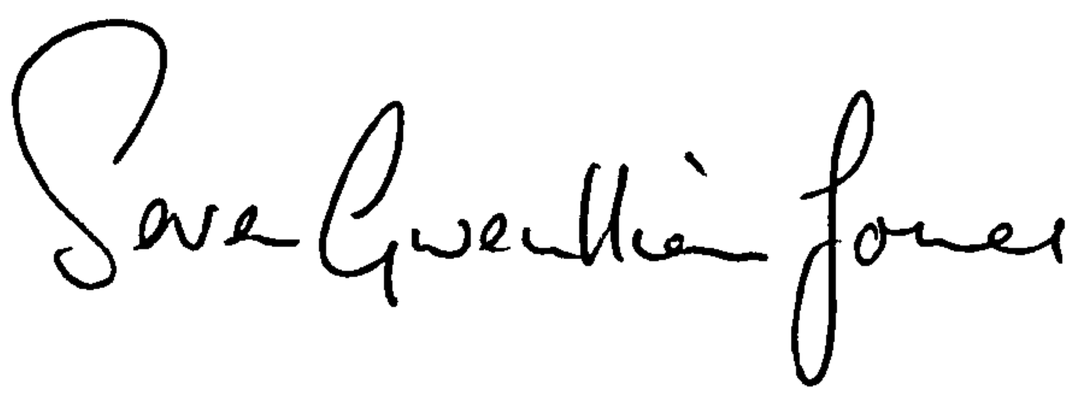
Last, but by no means least, I must thank Anna. The world is beautiful because you are in it. *Jeg elsker dig.*

AUTHOR'S DECLARATION

I declare that the work contained in this thesis is entirely my own. Wherever I have engaged the ideas of other in the course of my arguments, their work is acknowledged in the text or footnotes.



Sara Gwenllian Jones.

A NOTE ON STYLE

Footnote references to citations from play-texts give the part, act, or scene in large Roman numerals followed by the page number in Arabic. For example: Scene V, p.128 appears as "V: 128." Where a play-text is divided into both acts (or parts) *and* scenes, the act (or part) is given in large Roman, the scene in small Roman, and the page number in Arabic. For example: Act II, Scene 3, p.58 appears as "II.ii: 58."

An exception to this system is Brecht's *Saint Joan of the Stockyards*, where the play-text indicates divisions of scenes using lower-case letters. For example: Scene 9, j, p.174 here appears as "IX.j: 174." I have retained Brecht's lettering system in order to avoid translating alphabetical letters into Roman numerals and unnecessarily complicating the process of referring back to the play-text itself.

CHRONOLOGY

1411/1412	Joan of Arc born at Domrémy in Lorraine.
1415	French defeat at Agincourt.
1422	Charles VI dies and Charles VII is proclaimed king of France.
c.1424	Joan starts to hear voices.
1429	At the insistence of her voices, Joan travels to Vaucouleurs to see Robert de Baudricourt, who sends her on to Chinon where she gains an audience with the Dauphin. The exiled Parlement examine Joan at Poitiers and pronounce in her favour.
April	Joan leads the French army against the English stronghold at Orléans.
8 May	Joan succeeds in taking Orléans.
May-June	Joan's army takes Jargeau, Meung-sur-Loire, Beaugency, and Patay.
July	Coronation of Charles VII at Rheims cathedral.
Sept.	Joan attacks Paris and fails to take the city. Charles withdraws and the French army is disbanded.
Oct. - April	Joan fights at St. Pierre le Moustier, Moulins, La Charité-sur-Loire, Lagny.
1430	
23 May	Joan captured at Compiègne.
14 July	Joan held prisoner at Beaulieu and Beaurevoir. Pierre Cauchon, bishop of Beauvais, initiates legal proceedings against her.
Nov.	Duke of Burgundy surrenders Joan to Cauchon for trial.
1431	
Jan. - May	Joan imprisoned and on trial at Rouen castle.
24 May	Joan submits to the Church, assumes female dress, and signs her confession.
27 May	Joan resumes male dress and recants her confession.

28 May	Joan is pronounced heretic and excommunicated. The Church submits her to the secular arm for execution.
30 May	Joan is burned at the stake at Rouen.
1440	Gilles de Rais, Joan's former comrade-in-arms, is charged with murder and sorcery and is hanged.
1450	Charles VII instigates review of Joan's condemnation.
1452	Vatican begins an investigation into Joan's trial. Papal legate Cardinal Guillaume d'Estouteville opens the clerical inquiry.
1455-56	Rehabiliation trial is called. Findings of 1431 condemnation trial are rescinded and Joan is posthumously vindicated.
1591-92	English troops in France, supporting the cause of the Huguenot Henry of Navarre.
1592	Pandering to anti-French sentiment, Shakespeare writes *Henry VI, Part One*.
1753-54	Abbot Nicolas Lenglet-DuFresnoy publishes a treatise on Joan, basing his manuscript on Edmond Richer's unpublished sourcebook on Joan of c.1625-30. Richer's work is not credited by Lenglet-DuFresnoy.
1755	Voltaire writes *La Pucelle d'Orléans*, using Joan's story to allegorise the contemporary political situation.
1789	French Revolution.
1801	Schiller publishes *Die Jungfrau von Orléans*.
1803	Napoleon approves the construction of a monument to Joan at Orléans and instates May 8 as her official feast day.
1827	Publication of Abbot Buchon's incomplete collection of primary documents concerning Joan.
1841	Michelet publishes his hugely popular biography *La Vie de Jeanne d'Arc*, based on Buchon's compilation.
1841-49	Publication of Quicherat's five-volume edition of trial transcripts. Primary source of material for most scholars and writers thereafter.

1868	Eugène O'Reilly publishes first French language translation of trial transcripts.
1869	*Monsignor* Dupanloup and his supporters take their campaign for Joan's canonization to the Vatican.
1894	Pope Leo XIII declares Joan 'Venerable.'
1898	Hatot and Méliès each produce short films about Joan.
1902	T. Douglas Murray publishes the first English translation of the trial records.
1908	Anatole France publishes his biography of Joan, *La Vie de Jeanne d'Arc.*
1909	Joan is beatified.
1917	Release of Cecil B. De Mille's *Joan the Woman.*
1920	Joan is canonized.
1924	Shaw publishes his play *Saint Joan.*
1928	Release of Marco de Gastyne's film *La Merveilleuse Vie de Jeanne d'Arc.*
	Release of Carl Dreyer's film *La Passion de Jeanne d'Arc.*
1931	Publication of W.P. Barrett's English translation of the trial records.
1932	Publication of Brecht's *Saint Joan of the Stockyards.*
1935	Release of Gustav Ucicky's film *Das Mädchen Johanna.*
1937	Publication of Anna Seghers play *Der Prozess der Jeanne d'Arc zu Rouen 1431*, later adapted by Brecht.
1943	First perfomance of Brecht's *The Visions of Simone Machard* (published in 1956).
1946	Publication of Maxwell Anderson's *Joan of Lorraine.*
1948	Release of Victor Fleming's film, *Joan of Arc*, based on Anderson's play.
1952	First performance of Brecht's *The Trial of Saint Joan at Rouen, 1431* (adapted version of Anna Seghers 1937 play; Brecht's version published in 1959).
1953	Publication of Anouilh's *L'Alouette* (*The Lark*).

1957 Release of Otto Preminger's film *Saint Joan*, based on Shaw's play.

1962 Release of Robert Bresson's film *Le Procés de Jeanne d'Arc*.

1994 Release of Jacques Rivette's film *Jeanne la Pucelle*.

CHAPTER ONE

JOAN OF ARC

Joan of Arc lived for just nineteen years and has been dead for more than five centuries. Her brief, extraordinary life has inspired tens of thousands of scholarly and imaginative works -- more, almost certainly, than any other religious figure except Christ, and far more than it is possible to catalogue comprehensively.[1] Her likeness, instantly recognizable despite its myriad permutations, has adorned everything from matchbox covers to the banners of Jean-Marie Le Pen's extreme right-wing political party, *Le Front National*. Statues of her stand in the marketsquares of dozens of French towns; Joan the humble shepherdess, Joan at prayer, Joan in mysterious dialogue with her angelic Voices, Joan on horseback, armoured and triumphant. A museum is dedicated to her at her birthplace of Domremy in Lorraine, another at Orléans, the scene of her greatest military victory, and a third at Rouen, where she was burned at the stake in 1431. Her story has inspired innumerable writers, artists, and composers. Verdi made her the subject of his 1845 opera, *Giovanna d'Arco*; in 1878, Tchaikovsky also wrote an opera about her, titled *The Maid of Orléans*. Paul Claudel and Arthur Honegger wrote a critically acclaimed oratorio about her, *Jeanne au bûcher* (1937), which was made into a film by Roberto Rossellini in 1954. The great American dancer and choreographer Martha Graham based two of her dance-dramas upon Joan's life -- *The Triumph of Saint Joan* (first performed in 1951) and *Seraphic Dialogue* (first performed in 1955).

Joan has been the subject of countless paintings, sculptures, songs, poems, novels, plays, television and radio dramas. The list of actresses who have played her on stage

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[1] Nadia Margolis' useful resource book lists 1527 imaginative and scholarly works on the subject of Joan but she nevertheless notes in her introduction that "Contributions to this field might well be considered innumerable, even by the end of the nineteenth century." See Margolis, *Joan of Arc in History, Literature and Film* (New York & London: Garland Publishing Inc., 1990), p.ix.

includes Sarah Bernhardt, Sybil Thorndike, Elisabeth Bergner, Joan Plowright, and Imogen Stubbs; she has been recreated on screen by Hedy Lamarr, Geraldine Farrar, Renée Falconetti, Jean Seberg, and, most recently, by Sandrine Bonnaire. Ingrid Bergman has played her on stage in a production of Maxwell Anderson's play *Joan of Lorraine* (1950, first published 1946) and twice more on film. Only an inventory of the films made about her life, from Georges Hatot's *Jeanne d'Arc* of 1898 through to Jacques Rivette's *Jeanne la Pucelle* of 1994, may be considered complete (though such a list will require continual revision, since further productions of Joan's story undoubtedly will be made in the future). In the filmography given at the end of this study, I have also included the cinematic presence of certain 'Joan-types,' such as the half-mad visionary girl doomed to burn at the stake in Ingmar Bergman's *The Seventh Seal* (1957) and some the many films which invoke the figure of Joan of Arc as one part of their cultural grammar, as do Robert Stephenson's *Joan of Paris* (1942), Jean-Luc Godard's *Vivre Sa Vie* (1962), and Ulrike Ottinger's lesbian adventure fantasy *Johanna d'Arc of Mongolia* (1988). But no filmography concerning Joan of Arc can be considered comprehensive; the Joan motif recurs too frequently and in too many guises for any one study to record its every instance.

The earliest known poem about Joan's life is *Le Dittié de Jehanne d'Arc*, written by her contemporary and admirer Christine de Pisan in 1429, two years before Joan's death. From then on, Joan's presence in western art and literature is constant. The list of the better-known imaginative works in which she is invoked begins with Shakespeare's *Henry VI Part One*, written in 1592, in which her foreign and female otherness is allegorised as the antithesis of heroism and chivalric tradition. In the seventeenth century, Joan's compatriot, François de Malherbe, eulogized her in a poem in which he compares her to Alcides, who also suffered betrayal and death by burning.[1] In the next century, on the eve of the Enlightenment, Voltaire

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[1] François de Malherbe, "Sur la Pucelle d'Orléans brûlée par les Anglais" in *Oeuvres Poétiques*, ed. by René Fromilhague and Raymond Lebègue (Paris: Société les Belles Lettres, 1968), Vol. 1, p.198. First published 1613.

wrote his satirical epic *La Pucelle d'Orléans*,[1] parodying Homer and mocking Joan as a symbol of religious superstition and jingoism. In 1801, Schiller's romantic imagination rendered her almost unrecognizable in his play *Die Jungfrau von Orleans*[2], portraying her as an unworldly heroine who falls in love with an English soldier, loses her magical powers as a consequence, and dies on the battlefield in the arms of the French king.

Distortions such as those in the works of Shakespeare and Schiller were not always the result of partisanship or of deliberate dramatic licence; even during her own lifetime, the facts about Joan of Arc were already swamped by legend, superstition, and hearsay. It was not until the publication in the 1840s of Quicherat's five-volume compilation of the records of Joan's condemnation and rehabilitation trials[3] that a systematically researched and fully documented chronicle of her history was brought into the public domain. Quicherat's edition of the trial transcripts, and the publication of Michelet's biography *La Vie de Jeanne d'Arc* in 1841, inspired a widespread resurgence of interest in her story. The list of nineteenth century writers who subsequently invoked her in their work includes Alexandre Dumas (*père et fils*), Victor Hugo, Charles Péguy, Arthur Rimbaud, Dante Gabriel Rosetti (who translated Villon's "Ballade des Dames du temps jadis" of 1431 into English), Mark Twain, and Emile Zola, while the list of those who have re-invented her for stage or screen in the twentieth century runs into the hundreds and includes playwrights George Bernard Shaw, Bertolt Brecht, Jean Anouilh, and Jacques Audiberti, and filmmakers Cecil B. De Mille, Carl Dreyer, Otto Preminger, Robert Bresson, and Roberto Rossellini. Those who have chosen Joan of Arc as their subject have had to take into account not only the historical record of her life but also the longer history of her cultural reiteration; each re-telling of her story recreates Joan both as an historical figure and as a cultural motif with a wide range of extant symbolic resonances. George Bernard Shaw was well-aware that his own play contributed to an

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[1] Voltaire, "La Pucelle d'Orléans," in *Œuvres Completes de Voltaire*, ed. by Jeroom Vercruysse, (Geneve: Institut et Musee Voltaire, 1970), Vol. 7. First published 1762.
[2] Friedrich Schiller, "Die Jungfrau von Orleans," trans. Anna Swanwick, in *Schiller's Historical Dramas*, ed. by Henry G. Bohn, (London: Henry G. Bohn, 1947), pp329-437. First published 1801.
[3] Jules-Etienne-Joseph Quicherat, *Procés de la condamnation et de réhabilitation de Jeanne d'Arc dite la Pucelle* (New York: Johnson, 1965). Five volumes. First published 1841-49.

extensive canon of works concerning Joan when he wrote *Saint Joan* in 1924, stating in his Preface that he intended his play to counter Shakespeare's version of her story which, Shaw claimed, "grossly libels her in its concluding scenes in deference to Jingo patriotism."[1] Interviewed by Archibald Henderson in 1924, Shaw stated that he felt obliged to tell Joan's story because, "The pseudo-Shakespearian Joan ends in mere Jingo scurrility. Voltaire's mock-Homeric epic is an uproarious joke. Schiller's play is romantic flapdoodle.....I felt personally called on by Joan to do her dramatic justice....."[2]

The political import of Brecht's play *Saint Joan of the Stockyards* (1932) relies upon the audience's familiarity with Joan of Arc as a figure with a particular cultural history and significance; Brecht uses the character of Joan Dark to draw parallels between capitalist ideology and German classicism, as represented by the Joan figure in Schiller's *Die Jungfrau von Orleans*.[3] There are, in addition, a number of 'story-within-a-story' films in which the main character is an actress whose life is dramatically altered when she is cast as Joan of Arc, and which again rely upon the audience's familiarity with the cultural status of the Joan figure in order to construct both their themes and their plots; Henry Koster's *Between Us Girls* (1942), Gleb Panfilov's *Nachalo* (1971), and Irving Pichel's *The Miracle of the Bells* (1948), are but three examples of films of this type.

The remarkable resilience of the Joan motif, and of the particular set of historical, dramatic, and mythic gestures that it represents, demands close consideration. Through the centuries, the major elements of Joan's history have been consistently repeated in thousands of variations. Her rustic childhood, her mysterious voices and visions, her journey from Domrémy to Vaucouleurs and from there to the Dauphin's court at Chinon, her military triumphs, the anointing of Charles VII at Rheims Cathedral, her defeat at Paris, her capture

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[1] George Bernard Shaw, *Saint Joan* (Harmondsworth & New York: Penguin, 1946), Preface: 12.
[2] *Table-talk of G.B.S.*, (London: Chapman and Hall, 1925), pp44-45.
[3] See Hans Mayer, "The Scandal of Joan of Arc" in Harold Bloom (ed.), *Joan Of Arc* (New York and Philadelphia: Chelsea House Press, 1992), pp134-152. Mayer points out that the final scene of Brecht's play, in which Joan is passed a flag which drops from her hands as she dies, is playful reference to the romantic heroism of the final scene of Schiller's play, in which the dying Joan sinks beneath her banner (pp 143-144).

by the Burgundians at Compiègne, her imprisonment and trial at Rouen Castle, her confession and subsequent recantation of it, her death at the stake -- these are the given facts of the historical record, endlessly re-imagined, retold in part or in full, subject to any number of applications, interpretations, differences of emphasis, omissions, inventions, distortions. The temporal and circumstantial specificities of Joan's history are after all, in their subsequent cultural reiterations, only the background against which are enacted those conflicts of conscience, identity, and meaning, which are the means by which humanity confronts itself in the discourses of tragedy and of myth. The confrontation between Joan and her principal adversary Pierre Cauchon, Bishop of Beauvais, takes place within a time-space that is at once historically situated and mythically immediate. In the dialectics of female and male, of youth and age, of individual conscience and institutional authority, of the spiritual and the social, fundamental questions of human identity and human ordering are addressed; historical particularity assumes a mythic universality.

Three facts about Joan of Arc are known to almost everyone; that she dressed as a man, that she was burned at the stake, and that she was canonized[1]. While the relationship between the first two of these has an obvious, if perverse, logic, the third fact -- that of her canonization -- provides an apparently anomalous conclusion. After all, the Bible expressly forbids transvestism. Deuteronomy 22:5 clearly states that "A woman shall not wear anything that pertains to a man, nor shall a man put on a woman's garment; for whoever does these things is an abomination to the Lord your God." Similar sentiments are again expressed in the New Testament (I Corinthians II: 14-15), where Paul rails against the blurring of gender difference: "Doth not even nature itself teach you, that if a man have long hair, it is a shame to him? But if a woman have long hair, it is a glory to her; for her hair is given her for a covering." The Bible's condemnation of transvestism is explicit and apparently unequivocal;

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[1] Joan was declared Venerable by Pope Leo XIII in 1894, beatified in 1909, and canonized in 1920. She is the only person ever to have been both condemned as a heretic and canonized by the Roman Catholic Church.

nevertheless, the remarkable fact remains that in the western Christian tradition there exist dozens of legends concerning female transvestite monks and saints.

There is Thecla, whose story is recounted in the apocryphal *Acts of Paul*; a beautiful young acolyte of Paul's, she becomes a preacher in her own right, with followers of her own, and, despite Paul's express disapproval, subsequently cuts her hair short and puts on male dress. There is Wilgefortis (also known as 'Saint Uncumber') who, in order to avoid marriage to the king of Sicily, miraculously sprouted a beard and was promptly crucified by her outraged father. There is Pelagia, who dressed as a man and lived as a hermit on the Mount of Olives and whose true sex was not discovered until after her death. There is Eugenia, who lived as a monk and eventually became an abbot; accused of rape by a spurned female admirer, she was able to prove her innocence by revealing her true sex. The list of female transvestite saints is long and includes, among others, Euphrosyne, Susanna of Eleutheropolis, Theodora, Marina, Apollinaris, and Anastasia Patricia. There are also transvestite episodes in legends associated with Catherine of Siena and Margaret of Antioch -- two of the three saints with whom Joan of Arc identified her Voices (the third was the decidedly androgynous Saint Michael).

The proliferation and strangeness of such legends, and the epistemological uncertainties that they reflect, underscores the complexity of ideas about gender expressed within the Christian tradition through the ages. Although, as has been already noted, the Bible prohibits cross-dressing, in Galatians 3:27-28 we neverthless find Paul postulating a perfect spiritual state in which all racial, social, and gender distinctions are abolished: "For as many of you as have been baptized into Christ have put on Christ. There is neither Jew nor Greek, there is neither bond nor free, there is neither male or female: for ye are all one in Christ Jesus." Access to this realm of incorporeal equality nevertheless required identification with the corporeal Christ and, as John Anson has pointed out, "in the course of 'putting on Christ,' it would be natural enough to attempt to appropriate his male or androgynous form."[1]

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[1] John Anson, "The Female Transvestite in Early Monasticism: the Origin and Development of a Motif" in *Viator* 5 (1974), p.7.

The Christian identification of spirituality with the maleness of the incarnate Christ, and the related notion of the *imitatio Christi* as the fullest expression of spiritual life for both men and women, has inevitably problematized womanhood. On the one hand, there are the rigid ideas about female identity prescribed by Christian doctrine and secular society-at-large to which women have been expected to conform. On the other hand, there is the spiritual ideal embodied in the male Christ to which women have been expected to aspire, specifically by means of identification and imitation. This glaring paradox was immensely problematic throughout the Medieval period. Vern L. Bullough provides a succinct outline of the situational dynamics:

> ".....for a woman to assume a male guise to become more holy was permitted, but to compete with men on masculine grounds such as warfare was simply not permitted. Such competition represented not a gain in the status of woman but a loss of status for men, since a mere woman could succeed at what they regarded as strictly male tasks."[1]

Joan of Arc's transvestism embraces both of these conflicting notions, both in its historical actuality and in the subsequent history of her representation in culture. Her cross-dressing gives her considerable spiritual stature since it ostensibly makes her less female and more like the male Christ; at the same time, however, it enables her to enter the male sphere of activity and to usurp male prerogatives. She emerges, therefore, as a figure at once holy and subversive -- all the more disturbing because, while she appropriates male functions and privilege, she makes no attempt to disguise the fact that she is a woman; that is to say, she appropriates maleness without surrendering her femaleness and thus bespeaks a version of humanity that is beyond gender.

Joan of Arc's transvestism has always inspired controversy among scholars and artists alike as they have sought to describe and explain her. George Bernard Shaw's ready acceptance of Joan's cross-dressing and his contention, in the Preface to his play, that she

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[1] Vern L. Bullough, "Transvestites in the Middle Ages" in *The American Journal of Sociology* 79 (6), p.1390.

was "the sort of woman that wants to lead a man's life"[1] inspired a passionate counter-attack from the Swedish cultural historian Ingvald Raknem, who vehemently asserted that Joan was "never known to have talked slightingly of her own sex, of femininess, or of the traditional female dress. To dress like a man was for her a practical measure."[2] Raknem is by no means alone in his insistence that, beneath her battledress, Joan was a 'real' woman in the traditional sense -- a woman who no doubt would have happily devoted herself to marriage and child-bearing had not God intervened. A need to reassert orthodox gender boundaries inflects a great many studies of Joan of Arc, and Raknem is not alone in his assumption that practicality somehow precludes transvestism. But to make this argument is to ignore the fact that transvestism is innately practical, since the act of cross-dressing itself constitutes the practical means by which a woman or a man assumes a socio-cultural role exclusively reserved for a member of the opposite sex. An individual's choice of clothing is of consequence *only* because it signifies that individual's social identity and place in the social order; clothing provides crucial indication as to its wearer's gender, social class, occupation, nationality, and so on. The transvestite implicitly acknowledges the significatory function of dress by appropriating and subverting recognised sartorial codes for the purpose of transgressing orthodox gender constructs.

The transvestism of Joan of Arc has proved problematic in a great number of dramatic and cinematic treatments of her story. On the whole, it has been perceived as something which must be 'dealt with' and defused in narrative and image -- a tendency which has resulted in, among other absurdities, the matronly opera diva Geraldine Farrar heaving herself around in Cecil B. De Mille's aptly titled *Joan the Woman* (1917) wearing a full suit of armour plus a peculiar skirt of suitably feminine diaphanous fabrics or, on other occasions in the film, a knee-length, dress-like tunic. In 1932, production of a version of Joan's story which was to star Greta Garbo was cancelled at the screenplay stage, amid rumours that Louis B.

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[1] Shaw, 1946, Preface: 27.
[2] Ingvald Raknem, *Joan of Arc in History, Legend and Literature* (Oslo: Universitetsforlaget, 1971) p.195.

Mayer himself had the project killed, horrified at the thought of his star (whose cross-dressing and preference for women was well-known in Hollywood) appearing on screen in drag, without make-up, and with short hair.[1] The sexual and social implications of Joan's transvestism are, however, usually annulled by the careful insertion of 'safe' explanations (practicality and protection of her virginity are the most common) into the narrative of her story and by an overwhelming, concealing emphasis upon her religiosity, which serves to bury the socially subversive potential of the Joan figure beneath its elevated spiritual identification.

Almost all twentieth century versions of Joan's story are closely based upon the records of her condemnation and rehabilitation trials, which reveal that her judges at Rouen saw neither practicality nor holiness in her male dress. They saw a wilful subversion of the 'natural' order and were scandalized by it, as Article XIII of the trial transcripts makes clear:

> ".....she often dressed in rich and sumptuous habits, precious stuffs and cloths of gold and furs, and not only did she wear short tunics, but she dressed herself in tabards and garments open at the sides, whilst it is notorious that when she was captured she was wearing a loose cloak of cloth of gold, a cap on her head and her hair cropped round in man's style. And, in general, having cast aside all womanly decency, not only to the scorn of feminine modesty, but also of well-instructed men she had worn the apparel and garments of most dissolute men."[2]

It is clear from the meticulous detailing of the richness of Joan's clothing, and from the concluding sentence of the charge, that she is here accused not only of dressing like a man

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[1] Various suggestions have been made to explain the failure of this project, including Garbo's refusal to act in a film scripted by her former lover Mercedes d'Acosta. Whether true or not, the formulation and circulation of the rumour concerning Mayer's involvement testifies as to the potential for scandal inherent in the casting of the transvestite Garbo as Joan and it presages Mayer's later reluctance to allow Garbo to make and star in *Queen Christina* (1933) -- a bold project instigated by Garbo herself in which she plays the infamous transvestite lesbian Queen of Sweden and which was leached of much of its subversive potential by constant interference from Mayer and the censors. For further information on the Joan of Arc project, see Barry Paris, *Garbo* (London & Basingstoke: Sidgwick & Jackson, 1995), pp269-270.

[2] W.P. Barrett (trans.), *The Trial of Jeanne d'Arc* (London: Routledge, 1931), p.154.

but also of dressing like a fop. Her gender transgression doubles back on itself to become doubly subversive; in the eyes of her accusors, she embodied not only the masculine woman but also the effeminate man. One can also clearly discern, in the condemnatory description of her "rich and sumptuous habits," strong intimation of her other great transgression -- that of social class. Joan herself was of only slightly higher social status than a peasant, yet she had led some of the greatest French noblemen into battle and had defeated some of the greatest English and Burgundian noblemen. Throughout her career, she dressed and behaved much like any young gallant in a chivalric romance[1], bearing her famous white banner and bestowing gifts upon the most favoured of her many admirers as she led her army across France. Her mission, although undoubtedly and emphatically spiritually inspired, was not one of pious ascetism; in Joan, France had not found another Saint Genevieve.[2] Joan chose as her role model the idealized figure of the knight in shining armour, the crusader waging a Holy War and riding into battle under the banner of God, and it is this figure which she most resembles. And yet she was not, and never could be, a knight in the ordinary sense, excluded both by her gender and by her social class. This fact, together with her apparent disregard for the expedient niceties of feudal custom, meant that her actions could not be allowed to set precedents that threatened to undermine the entire feudal system. Article XXXIX of the charges against her reflects precisely this anxiety, accusing Joan of having committed a "mortal sin" by having a prisoner-of-war, "a certain Franquet d'Arras,"[3] tried for war crimes and put to death rather than ransomed, as was the usual practice. Joan's seemingly ruthless pragmatism flew in the face of a long tradition of aristocratic immunity by which means noblemen on opposing sides could either make a profit or pay to save their own skins, as circumstances allowed. In refusing to play the ransom game and instead seeking victory at all costs, heedless of class loyalty and personal gain,

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[1] See Marina Warner, *Joan of Arc* (London: Vintage, 1991) Chapter 8, "Knight", pp159-182.
[2] Saint Genevieve lived in the fourth century and is said to have led an armed band to obtain provisions when Paris was besieged by the Franks. She was renowned for her courage, her political influence, and her ascetism, and is said to have exhorted the Parisians to pray and fast in order to avert the arrival of Attila the Hun.
[3] Barrett, 1931, p.183.

Joan's tactics foreshadowed the end of feudal warfare and the dawning of the modern era of all-out war. At the same time, by having Franquet d'Arras tried, she was also bringing into being a new ethical code which held that soldiers -- even soldiers of noble birth -- answer for the crimes which they committed in wartime. In *The Trial of Saint Joan at Rouen, 1431* (first published 1959), Brecht makes this episode, with its powerful social implications, the subject of one of only four charges raised against her by the Bishop in his summary of the trial.[1] Here, Joan is cast as a species of 'class warrior,' a heroine of the common people, engaged in ideological combat with a corrupt institution which serves neither justice nor its country but rather the interests of the ruling class whose instrument it is.

For both Joan and her judges, her cross-dressing was the most tangible sign of her otherworldliness, of her refusal to be contained or governed by the same laws as ordinary humanity. To her accusors, her transvestism seemed not only unnatural and profane but also constituted "an evil example to other women"[2] -- a statement which again reflects fears about Joan's impact and influence upon well-ordered society. Joan's judges returned to the subject of her dress over and over again in the course of her trial, worrying at it from every possible angle. When the long months of interrogation were finally over, Joan's choice of clothing formed the subject of five of the seventy charges made against her and it was mentioned again in a further two. It was the only charge to be reiterated midway in the proceedings, and when the seventy charges were eventually condensed into twelve the subject of Joan's transvestism constituted the whole of Article I, was lengthily detailed in Article V, and was again referred to in Article VII. It was, then, by no means an incidental matter in her prosecution, as is further evidenced by the judges' efforts to persuade Joan into a gown. Not even the repeated bribe of being allowed to hear Mass, which she very much wanted to do, had the desired effect. "Have a long dress, reaching down to the ground, with no train, made for me, and give it me to go to Mass," Joan told them, "and on my return I will put on once

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[1] Trans. Ralph Manheim and Wolfgang Sauerlander in Brecht, *Collected Plays*, ed. by Ralph Manheim and John Willett, (New York: Vintage, 1973) Vol. 9, IV: 166.
[2] Barrett, 1931, p.272.

more the dress I have."[1] Her eventual confession was accepted on condition that she dressed herself in women's clothes; when she relapsed, she re-asserted herself by resuming her male dress. Her male clothing apparently symbolised her integrity; it was the means by which she made sense of herself and placed herself in the world. In the end, it seems that she chose to die rather than surrender it.

The transcripts of Joan's trial of condemnation record the legal process that was brought to bear upon her and her responses within and to it; but even as the historical record was being written down it already, and unavoidably, constituted a representation. The Joan of Arc that emerges from this testimony is the construction of her persecutors and of her own responses to and evasions of their interrogations. The questions and accusations levelled at her amount to nothing less than a machinery of definition, of specification directed towards her epistemological containment; they demand that she deny her supernatural voices and surrender her male dress and they insist that she inhabit the categories and observe the behavioural conventions described by the nominatives 'heretic,' 'penitent,' and 'woman' that the forces of law and order have chosen for her. The choice the judges offer her is one of submission or fatal exclusion; she must conform or die. Joan's male dress is the most tangible and non-negotiable expression of the transgressiveness which places her outside that which is constructed as the ordinary run of humanity; it is her transvestism, more than anything else, which identifies her as a social and cultural outlaw. And 'outlaw' she must be, in the most literal sense, since she embodies and represents a catastrophic failure of definitional process; for if Joan -- a woman -- can successfully perform the masculine then masculinity itself is revealed as something which is performed. It can no longer be assumed that, to use Judith Butler's words, "the construction of 'men' will accrue exclusively to the bodies of males or that 'women' will interpret only female bodies."[2] It becomes impossible to maintain intact the qualitative categories which delineate 'femininity' and 'masculinity' as epistemological truths entirely determined by and consistent with biological gender.

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[1] Barrett, 1931, p.157.
[2] *Gender Trouble* (New York and London: Routledge, 1990), p.6.

The historical and mythic drama of Joan's trial begins in this confrontation between the processes of definition and their elusive, ambiguous subject. It begins in the impossibility of imposing categorical order upon transgressive action and transcendental experience. The 'problem of Joan' evident in her history has remained, down the centuries, as the complex dynamic of her myth and the central, compelling mystery which almost all representations of her seek to solve. How is the transgressive Joan figure to be captured, explained, neutralized? What are its implications? How can transgression be harnessed to notions of Joan's holiness in ways which serve rather than undermine the social order? How can the 'unnatural' be rendered 'supernatural'? What is the relationship between these concepts? What is the relationship between trangression and transcendence? Who, what, and where, in the relentless quest for meaning, is Joan of Arc?

Claude Lévi-Strauss has noted "how myths operate in men's minds without their being aware of the fact."[1] Lévi-Strauss was advancing the structuralist argument for a collective unconscious but it does seem to be the case that, perhaps for less abstract reasons than those described by the formulae of holistic structural anthropology, the distinctions between myth and history and between myth and individual acts of invention are less than clear-cut. It is, for example, indisputable that in her own lifetime Joan of Arc was already widely understood in mythic terms; had it been otherwise, her remarkable career would not have been possible. Anatole France points out that:

> ".....at no period of her existence was Jeanne known otherwise than by fables.....if she moved multitudes it was by the spreading abroad of countless legends which sprang up wherever she passed and made way before her. And indeed there is much food for thought in that dazzling obscurity, which from the very first enwrapped the Maid, in those radiant clouds of myth which, while concealing her, rendered her all the more imposing."[2]

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[1] Claude Lévi-Strauss, *The Raw and the Cooked*, trans. John and Doreen Weightman (London: Jonathan Cape, 1970), p.12.

[2] *The Life of Joan of Arc*, trans. Winifred Stephens (London: The Bodley Head, 1908), Vol.1 (2 volumes), p.*xxii*.

Joan's armoured and celebrated virginity was strongly, and inevitably, reminiscent of the warrior maidens of classical mythology -- Athena, Artemis, the Amazons -- and, crucially, reflected the elevated symbolic value of virginity in the western Christian tradition. When she called herself *La Pucelle* ("the Maid"), Joan was consciously indicating and appropriating the mythical and mystical implications of her own virginal status. The humble circumstances of her birth and early life, the Divine inspiration and guidance that she claimed for her Messianic mission, and the miracles which were attributed to her by her contemporaries, clearly and strongly recalled Christ -- an analogy that was further strengthened by the circumstances of her death and which is echoed, often explicitly, in many dramatic and filmic treatments of her story. As Marina Warner has noted, to her contemporaries "Joan was a familiar face, but it had hardly ever been seen in the real world before."[1] It should not surprise us if in the verifiable narrative of Joan's history we already detect the substance and logic of myth. The Joan figure is both subject and object, in a Husserlian sense, within its own mythic presence; it both creates and is given meaning. Joan's actions and choices were made in mimetic interaction with the corpus of myths that informed her culture and experience and into which, on a symbolic level, she herself entered. The means by which humanity makes itself intelligible to itself are inevitably to some extent self-fulfilling. As myth is used (by no means always innocently) to make human behaviour epistemologically meaningful, so too does it come to constitute a repertoire of meaningful behaviours; it re-enters our reality as we re-enact its configurations. There is a real sense in which the Joan figure realized by history begins with the Joan figure realized by myth, and vice-versa.

But to say that Joan of Arc re-enacted and recalled certain mythic gestures and motifs in her own living history does not, on its own, satisfactorily account for the persistence of her story in the western imagination across five hundred years, and neither does it entirely explain the nature of the particular mythic formulations that it has engendered. What is it that

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[1] Warner, 1991, p.236.

makes the limited schematic possibilitites of Joan's story susceptible to such diversity of inference and imaginative interpretation? Why do the various mythic elements and resonances encoded in the Joan figure continue to exercise such fascination in the twentieth century? By what processes of translation are they adapted to admit new perspectives on old conflicts? The twentieth century conjures Joan of Arc out of an alien landscape, across a great divide that must be measured not only in years but also in cataclysmic advances in religious, social, political, scientific, and philosophical thought. Joan's reality, emphatically, is not our reality. So why is it that, as we approach the end of the second millennium, we are still learning and expressing something about ourselves by looking back over our shoulders to a nineteen-year-old girl who was burned at the stake in 1431? What is it about Joan of Arc that is at once so ancient and so immediate, so consistent and so endlessly adaptable?

In an interview with Archibald Henderson given in 1924, George Bernard Shaw outlined his reasons for having written *Saint Joan*, his play of the same year:

> "Joan is a first-class dramatic subject ready-made. You have a heroic character, caught between 'the fell-incenséd points' of the Catholic Church and the Holy Roman Empire, between Feudalism and Nationalism, between Protestantism and Ecclesiasticism, and driven by her virtues and her innocence of the world to a tragic death which has secured her immortality. What more could you want for a tragedy as great as that of Prometheus?"[1]

That the conflicts presented by Joan's history make good dramatic material is self-evident; what is of greater interest here is Shaw's ready application of relatively modern concepts such as 'Nationalism' and 'Protestantism' to the dynamics of Joan's story. Bertolt Brecht employed even greater measures of dramatic licence in his three 'Joan' plays; he invoked her as a Salvation Army officer turned Marxist revolutionary in *Saint Joan of the Stockyards* (1932), as a less ideologically-defined heroine-of-the-people in his 1952 stage adaptation

[1] Henderson, 1925, p.44.

(first published in 1959) of Anne Segher's radio-play *The Trial of Joan of Arc at Rouen, 1431* (1937), and as a symbol of national resistance in Occupied France in *The Visions of Simone Machard* (1943). Throughout the history of her representation, Joan of Arc has proved peculiarly adaptable to a variety of ideological interpretations. Josef Goebbels perceived her as innately autocratic, reactionary, and anti-English, and gave his whole-hearted approval to a 1935 Ufa production of her life story; *Das Mädchen Johanna*, directed by Gustav Ucicky and starring Angela Salloker, was released as part of a pre-war Nazi propaganda offensive designed to convince the French people that Germany, and not England, was their natural ally. The political flexibility of the Joan figure seems limitless, but equally can be omitted altogether; Robert Bresson, for example, rejected a secular, overtly political interpretation of Joan in his 1962 film *The Trial of Joan of Arc* and instead sublimated the earthly, corporeal, and social aspects of Joan's story in order to pursue an idealistic vision of ascetic Catholic spirituality outside historical circumstance. The introductory text at the beginning of the film asserts that "The interests at stake are known," and the rest of the film makes no explicit reference to the political situation around and within the process of Joan's trial. Bresson's film is concerned with the exposition of Joan's soul and the articulation of the transcendent, not with her public, political identity.

Which, and how much, of these varied interpretations and constructions of Joan's 'meaning' can claim some historical justification is not the concern of this study. Such an analysis would, in any case, have to conclude that every version of the Joan figure contains some element or echo of truth, and that none can claim to have entirely captured the 'authentic' Joan. This is so because, no matter how rigorous our methods or how disciplined our imaginations, we cannot summon from history a Joan of Arc more "real" to us than the Joan of Arc of myth, and because at the heart of both Joan's history and her myth the only absolute certainty is that of her ambiguity.

As we have already seen, the number of imaginative works on the matter of Joan of Arc runs into thousands. Even if we concern ourselves only with works produced in the twentieth century, the quantity of available material nevertheless remains so vast that any attempt to study the modern Johannic canon in its entirety is doomed to failure from the outset. However, this study is not intended as a comprehensive catalogue charting Joan of Arc's every appearance in western culture. It is, necessarily, concerned with imaginative interpretations of the mythic Joan figure in a small, and therefore manageable, number of film and play texts. The texts under consideration are restricted to those which exclusively relate Joan of Arc's story; texts which merely invoke her in the course of telling other stories are excluded. Many plays have been written on the subject of Joan; those selected for analysis here can be reasonably considered as representative of the cultural 'mainstream' and its on-going fascination with the Joan figure -- Shaw's *Saint Joan*, Maxwell Anderson's *Joan of Lorraine*, Jean Anouilh's *The Lark* (1953), and two of Bertolt Brecht's three 'Joan' plays, *Saint Joan of the Stockyards* and *The Trial of Joan of Arc at Rouen, 1431*. There are far fewer films than there are plays concerning Joan of Arc, but nevertheless the quantity of material is such that it is possible to subject only a limited number of these to in-depth analysis. Carl Dreyer's *The Passion of Joan of Arc* (1928) and Robert Bresson's *The Trial of Joan of Arc* (1962) are here scrutinized from a variety of perspectives; both films are 'serious' cinematic considerations of Joan's story, both confine their narratives to Joan's trial at Rouen, and both seek to remove their subject from the restrictions of historical 'authenticity' in order pursue the metahistorical and universal concerns which are the substance of her mythic interpretation. Jacques Rivette's *Jeanne la Pucelle* (1994) is also discussed at length. Other films -- including de Gastyne's *La Merveilleuse Vie de Jeanne d'Arc* (1928), Fleming's *Joan of Arc* (1948), Preminger's *Saint Joan* (1957), and De Mille's *Joan the Woman* (1917) -- are discussed as they come into and influence our consideration of the tragic, transgressive, and transcendent aspects of the mythic Joan figure. Four films are mentioned for which textual analysis has proved impossible; Georges Hatot's pioneering film of 1898, *Jeanne*

d'Arc, Nino Oxilia's *Giovanna d'Arco* (1913), and Gustav Ucicky's *Das Mädchen Johanna* have not survived the vicissitudes of history, while Stephen Rumbelow's low budget British production of 1977, *St. Joan*, is nowhere to be found in the film archives to which I have had access.

The peculiar nature of Joan of Arc's story and the long and diverse history of its cultural reiteration suggest a variety of critical approaches, all of which merit scholarly investigation. Joan's place in western culture implicates contemporary religious concerns, questions about the role of culture in the construction of social identities, about the political uses and abuses of history and culture, and about the representation of women. The study in hand originated in the vague notion that, by analysising representations of the Joan figure within the socio-political and historical context of their production, it would be possible to use each portrayal Joan of Arc as a window through which to observe the machinations of culture engaging with, and commenting upon, the historical moment and socio-cultural context in which a particular text was produced. Thus, Ucicky's film *Das Mädchen Johanna* might tell us something about the aestheticization and mythologisation of politics in Nazi Germany, while Shaw's *Saint Joan* would shed light on the changing attitudes towards women and warfare in the post-war Britain of the 1920's. However, it became increasingly clear that the question which nagged most insistently was not so much *how* the Joan figure was being used but *why* it was being used at all. What is it about Joan of Arc which so inspires the cultural imagination? In order to explore the implications of this question, the original trajectory of this study has been reversed; instead of looking *through* representations of Joan of Arc in order to examine the historical machinations of western culture, this project looks *at* the Joan figure and aims to explore those aspects of its mythic substance which make it at once so compelling and so adaptable as an imaginative subject. Rather than looking at how the Joan figure has been used in western culture to signify and comment upon wider social, political, and religious issues, this study seeks some understanding of how, why, and on what terms, western culture engages with the Joan figure itself. Instead of looking at how the Joan figure is brought to

bear upon culture, then, the focus of this research is upon how, and to what effect, culture is brought to bear upon the Joan figure.

Much scholarly attention has been devoted to Joan of Arc as both an historical and a cultural figure. There exist thousands of works which examine her history, and hundreds more which are concerned with her status as a cultural icon. The latter, however, in no sense constitute a coherent repertoire of critical work. Representations of the Joan figure have most commonly been examined in studies which are concerned with the *œuvre* of a particular *auteur*; David Bordwell's work on Carl Dreyer, Paul Schrader's *Transcendental Style in Film; Ozu, Bresson, Dreyer*, and Margery M. Morgan's study of Shaw's plays, are but a few representative examples of the many scholarly works which discuss Joan of Arc not as a subject in her own right but as a trope in the *auteur*'s cultural repertoire. Marina Warner's *Joan of Arc: the Image of Female Heroism* is an excellent analysis of Joan's history and of the cultural origins and uses of the Joan motif over the last five centuries and is undoubtedly the most informative and interesting work on the subject. However, its breadth of scope disallows detailed considerations of individual play and film texts.

Other studies, such as Ingvald Raknem's *Joan of Arc in History, Legend, and Literature*, have sought to establish the degree of "authenticity" in various representations of Joan of Arc by comparing imaginative interpretations of her story against constructions of the "real" Joan as she emerges from the critical analysis of her verifiable history. Raknem's analysis of the Joan figure in the works of dramatists such as Schiller, Shaw, Brecht, and Anderson, is peppered with references to "mistakes" and "misrepresentations" regarding dramatic reconstructions of Joan's character and motivation -- references which tell us more about Raknem's subjective, and somewhat romantically idealistic, understanding of Joan than they do about either her history or the works under discussion. Such an approach is doomed from the outset. Firstly, it recognises Joan of Arc only as a historical figure and largely ignores, or undervalues, the mythic function that her history has assumed and served in its cultural reiteration. Secondly, it wrongly assumes that the purpose and concern of "historical" drama

is historical authenticity and it therefore subjects fiction to the kind of scrutiny ordinarily only applied to factual texts. Finally, it assumes that, through careful analysis of the historical records, it is possible to reconstruct the "authentic" Joan of Arc without recourse to the imagination. While the various ways in which Joan of Arc's history has been interpreted and used in cinema and drama necessarily constitute the starting-point of any study concerned with representations of the Joan figure, it is surely erroneous to use historical authenticity as an instrument of critical analysis.

It has been necessary to assume that it is reasonable to consider film and play texts concerning the Joan figure as narratives engaged in a cultural process of mythic reiteration. Clearly, cinema and drama as narrative systems are not in any sense innately mythic discourses but rather become so in those instances in which they *participate* in a wider mythic discourse. The myth of Joan of Arc -- which exists independently of any single reiteration of itself and which has meanings inscribed in its form which may be held to be universal rather than the property or creation of a single text which takes Joan of Arc as its subject -- is, on the one hand, seized by the text and, on the other hand, itself seizes the text as a unit of its syntax. That is to say, the mythic form of the Joan figure generates meanings which are not the "property" of any single text but which instead appropriate each and every "Joan" text as a constituent element of their own continual regeneration within culture. Every text concerning Joan of Arc, whether historical or fictional, is also a reading. It cannot be otherwise. Again, we are returned to the Joan figure as both subject and object, as both the producer and the product of multiple meanings.

The chapters that follow are arranged into three sections which together constitute an "excavation" of the Joan myth as it is represented in film and drama. The first five chapters concerned with the Joan myth as a tragedy -- that is, with the characteristics of the tragic hero and the extent to which Joan of Arc embodies them, with the ethical conflicts which constitute the dynamics of her story, and with their translation into the metaphysics of good and evil. In Chapter Six, we will look beyond the tragic framework of Joan's story to the

ambiguities and transgressions which underlie, and undermine, its concrete dialectics and which configure its peculiarly reflexive nature; the functional importance of Joan's martyrdom will be analysed in the order to shed some light on the relationship between the concepts of transgression and transcendence, the unnatural and the supernatural. In Chapters Seven and Eight, we will bring together these themes in order to consider the mythic nature and implications of the Joan figure.

CHAPTER 2

BEYOND GOOD AND EVIL: THE QUESTION OF INNOCENCE

Simple misfortune is not tragedy. Tragic drama, as Hegel has demonstrated, requires a dynamic of ethical collision, of substantive conflict which is manifested in the situating of the ethically-determined tragic hero in antagonistic relation to "an ethical Power which opposes them and possesses an equal ethical claim to recognition."[1] The tragic conflict must be such that no ethical reconciliation is possible; its resolution can only be aesthetic, since there can be no question of compromise by either party without undermining the necessary ethical basis of their collision. Tragic conflict is therefore invariably resolved by the circumstantial (though never the ethical) defeat of the tragic hero who, by definition, cannot be allowed to prevail.

Hegel's general model of tragedy neatly concurs with the tragical framework of Joan of Arc's history and its subsequent dramatic treatments; when Joan asserts and acts upon the authority of her voices and visions -- which constitute the explicit, exteriorised expression of her ethical consciousness -- in defiance of the legitimate authority of the State and the Church Militant, therein occurs a conflict of ethics which is precisely Hegelian. Personal conscience is manifested in active opposition to public and social requirements; the ethical individual is compelled to confront the ethical institution, the spiritual self finds itself in conflict with spiritual office. No matter what interpretations are placed upon Joan's actions and tragic situation, the Joan figure always, and necessarily, remains a performance of ethical substance, of synonymity between individual consciousness and ethical action, the Will and the Deed. Joan is what she wills and does and cannot be other than the sum of her ethically-defined self. In Jean Anouilh's *The Lark*, Joan, addressing Warwick after having

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[1] G.W. P. Hegel, *The Philosophy of Fine Art*, trans. F.P.B. Osmaston, (London: G. Bell & Sons, Ltd., 1920), Vol. IV, p.335.

signed her confession, expresses exactly this sentiment. Imagining another, alien version of herself, from which she distances herself by referring to it in the third person, she describes the future which now faces her in terms of a merely physical continuance, emptied of purpose and meaning:

> "What is left of me when I am not Joan any longer?.....Do you see Joan after living through it, when things have adjusted themselves: Joan, set free, perhaps, and vegetating at the French court on her small pension?.....Joan accepting everything, fat and complacent, Joan doing nothing but eat. Can you see me painted and powdered, trying to look fashionable, getting entangled in her skirts, fussing over her little dog, or trailing a man at her heels: who knows, perhaps with a husband?.....I don't want everything to come to an end! Or at least not an end like that, an end which is no end at all."[1]

Joan's words describe a corporeal existence stripped of spiritual and ethical meaning. The body becomes a passive organism, its purposelessness reducing it to nothing more than a physical presence dedicated to the base need to consume and the base function of adornment. It is a key passage, marking Joan's leap from doubt and despair to certainty and self-knowledge; with it, she truly becomes a tragic hero, both doomed and redeemed by her own integrity. Immediately after this conversation with Warwick, Joan recants her confession. She chooses a coherent self and death rather than a life which entails the denial of her ethical identity, an "end" which she perceives as not only meaningless in itself but also as one which will retrospectively negate the ethical purpose which has so far informed her actions -- "an end which is no end at all." The ethical force of the Joan figure becomes complete with this moment of clarity and choice in which death itself is transformed into an unassailable gesture of integrity. "It's true that she would compromise in little things....." says Mary in Maxwell Anderson's *Joan of Lorraine*, "But it's also true that she would not compromise her belief -- her own soul. She'd rather step into the fire -- and she does."[2]

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[1] Jean Anouilh, *The Lark*, trans. Christopher Fry (London: Methuen, 1990), II: 96-97.
[2] Maxwell Anderson, *Joan of Lorraine* (London: Bodley Head, 1950), II: 125.

Yet the tragic hero's decision to "step into the fire" is neither straightforward nor easily taken. As the tragic conflict unfolds externally, in the public arena, there also occurs a desperate interior struggle as increasingly adverse circumstances compel the tragic hero to confront himself. Subjected to threats of extreme physical violence, to psychological assaults which distort and undermine his position within the ethical discourse, to the manifold pressures brought to bear upon him as he confronts the representatives of material and institutional power, the tragic hero is riven by doubts and fears. No longer able to act independently, he is obliged to re-examine and re-evaluate that which makes up his coherent identity, to seek a deeper confirmation of that which has brought him to the brink of disaster. The tragic hero questions his own ethical substance in an attempt to establish whether or not it is worth dying for and can find no answer outside its parameters. For Maxwell Anderson, such uncertainty is the very essence of Joan of Arc's faith:

> "Oh, can't you see that what I want is to do right, and not to do wrong? Can't you see that this is my greater torture? More than the torment of the guards, more than the torment of the lack of sleep, more than the threat of the fire -- this torment of not knowing whether I am right or wrong? My Voices came to me when I was a child, and I loved them and worshipped them, and I followed them all my life. But don't you see that I would give them up instantly if I knew they were evil? Only I don't know. And you haven't told me. What is all this trial for? I wish to do right. It's because I wish to do right that I stand out stubbornly through these sleepless nights and try to find God's way in my thinking!"[1]

The will to live collides with the will to maintain the integrity of the self, to act righteously according to an individual code which cannot rely upon any external authority for its determination. In Joan of Arc's story, this collision is explicit and pivotal. Alone and terrified, tormented by doubts and by the inexplicable silence of the supernatural voices that have so far guided her, Joan surrenders to the authority of the Church. She takes off her male clothing and resumes woman's dress; she asserts that her voices and visions have misled

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[1] Anderson, 1950, II: 113.

her; she meekly signs the confession that has been written for her. She chooses life and, having chosen it, discovers that she no longer has a place within it; that is to say, she arrives at last at the realization that the life she has won through her surrender requires that she exist henceforth as a stranger to herself. Her surrender belongs, as George Steiner notes, "to the topos of a last flinching before a willed, accepted self-sacrifice"[1] that is also present in the narratives of Antigone's confrontation with Creon and of Christ's anguish in the Garden of Gethsemene. It is the key scene in almost every dramatic representation of her; Joan, like Christ, falters before her destiny and -- also like Christ -- finds the strength to meet it through her submission to uncertainty and fear. The moment of her greatest defeat leads directly to her spiritual triumph, since it is through surrender that she at last achieves absolute clarity of being, absolute self-knowledge. She accepts -- crucially -- full responsibility for herself. "Well, I take it on, O God," she cries in Anouilh's *The Lark*, "I take it upon myself! I give Joan back to You: true to what she is, now and forever!"[2]

The Joan figure is tragic precisely *because* she acts upon, and in full knowledge of, her own ethical culpability. The tragic hero, Hegel argues, is necessarily characterised by an integrity which precludes the evasion of consequence and/or blame; he is both ethically and consequentially aware but nevertheless, and against all which contradicts and confronts him, he maintains the cohesion of Will and Deed which constitutes his active identity. The tragic hero's innocence, in both the judicial and the ethical sense, is unsupportable: "One can in fact urge nothing more intolerable against a hero of this type than by saying that he has acted innocently. It is a point of honour with such great characters that they are guilty."[3] Joan's documented trial at Rouen admits no judicial possibility of her innocence. That she is guilty is not in question; instead, the trial is performed in order to determine the *nature* of her guilt so that her judges may decide upon an appropriate punishment. Either she is guilty and repentent, in which case she can be re-admitted to the Church and punished by

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[1] George Steiner, *Antigones* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1986), p.279.
[2] Anouilh, 1990, II: 97-98.
[3] Hegel, 1920, p.321.

imprisonment, or she is guilty and unrepentent, in which case she must be excommunicated and handed over to the secular arm for execution. In Brecht's *The Trial of Saint Joan at Rouen, 1431*, Massieu succinctly outlines the limited judicial possibilities:

> "This is the sentence in case she recants.....This is the sentence if she fails to recant.....This is the recantation.....Bid her sign the recantation in order that this sentence.....may not become effective."[1]

Carl Dreyer's film *The Passion of Joan of Arc* (1928) similarly excludes the possibility of a verdict of innocence. The principle aim of Joan's prosecutors throughout the trial is to elicit a confession from her; that is to say, they seek to compel her to admit that her actions were either ethically misguided or wholly devoid of ethical substance. In order to make an acceptable confession of guilt, then, Joan must separate her actions from her ethical make-up and assert that she has "acted innocently," in the Hegelian sense. The trial is dedicated to the disavowal of her ethical claims rather than to the physical destruction of Joan herself. The judges' relentless interrogations, focused upon the issues of Joan's Voices and male dress, are calculated to compel Joan to deny her own ethical integrity and surrender to the authority of the Church. "Do you not consider that these learned doctors are likely to be endowed with more wisdom than you?" asks one of the judges. Joan counters this claim to ethical superiority with an assertion of her own inner certainty: "But the wisdom of God is even greater!" When the judges' interrogatory tactics fail, they resort to threatening Joan with torture and her terrified response, far from being a protestation of her innocence, is instead a vehement statement of her guilt in the purest Hegelian sense:

> "Truly if you separate my soul from my body, I will not deny the truth of what I have said before.....and if I say anything I shall afterwards declare that you have compelled me to say it by force."

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[1] Brecht, 1973, IX: 175.

Joan recognizes that, if she is tortured, her integrity may be torn asunder -- her "soul" separated from her "body," her ethical identity divorced once and for all from the history of her actions. As a precaution against this possibility, she makes clear the distinction between her "true" self and the creature which her enemies may make of her by means of torture. Later in the film, when she recants her recantation, she will re-establish her ethical coherence by referring to her confession in terms of a betrayal of her inner light: "I have committed a great sin.....I have denied God in order to save my life.....Everything I said was for fear of the stake!" With this, Joan's final abjuration, unity of ethical conscience and action is restored and the irreconcilable tragic conflict resumes.

From here onwards, Joan's death -- her "tragic fall" -- is confirmed as the only possible resolution thematically as well as in terms of the historical narrative. Such inevitability is, Oscar Mandel suggests, "the *sine qua non* of tragedy," and resides in "an original and fatal defect in the relation between a purpose and a something within or without."[1] The element of inevitability in Joan's story operates on two levels; the well-known historical configuration of her story necessarily concludes with her death as a factual, temporal event, while the tragic narrative of her drama moves inexorably towards her martyrdom as the only possible conclusion to the ethical conflict which is established in the text as the dynamic of action. The tragic fall, Mandel notes, is the "inevitable consequence of a given purpose *in a given world*, external or internal to the protagonist."[2] That is to say, the inevitability of Joan's tragic fall emerges not only from the sequential itinerary of events within a narrative but also from her ethically-determined actions and responses within the given circumstantial context as it is furnished within a text. In the end, Joan will go to the stake not because of *what* she has done (her guilt of deed) but because of *why* she has done it (her ethical culpability). It is the collisional interplay of the exterior and the interior which configures her story as tragedy.

In *Saint Joan*, Shaw cannot quite bring himself to abandon altogether the notion of Joan's innocence, stating -- rather oddly -- in his preface that the "enormity of Joan's pretension was

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[1] Oscar Mandel, *A Definition of Tragedy* (New York: New York University Press, 1973), p.24.
[2] *Ibid.*, p.33.

proved by her unconsciousness of it, which we call her innocence, and her friends called her simplicity."[1] But Shaw's Joan is innocent, in the ethical sense, only in so far as she is "in a state of invincible ignorance as to the Church's view"[2]; that is to say, Shaw translates Joan's political naivety as innocence. Joan expresses disbelief at the Archbishop's suggestion that the Church will condemn her as a witch: "What I have done is according to God. They could not burn a woman for speaking the truth."[3] But Joan's "innocence" here merely marks her failure to recognize that her own version of "the truth" conflicts with that of the Church; it nevertheless remains an assertion of ethical substance and culpability. Neither can even this "innocence" be maintained; Joan must, in the end, remain ethically intact despite knowing that her stance means that she must confront, and be condemned by, the Church. This she does, acknowledging no authority but that of God, which she maintains in opposition to the spiritual authority of the Church:

> "His ways are not your ways. He wills that I go through the fire to His bosom; for I am His child, and you are not fit that I should live among you. That is my last word to you."[4]

While Joan's fiercely stated integrity marks her greatness so too, Shaw's play suggests, does it imply narrowness and arrogance; her faith may be admirable and moving, but it is also a contemptuous rejection of any counsel but her own. "What God made me do I will never go back on," Joan tells d'Estivet, "and what He has commanded or shall command I will not fail to do in spite of any man alive."[5] Tragic conflict requires that its actors be humble before their own guiding principles and yet arrogant enough to uphold those principles over and above all that is contrary to them, without concession to doubt and without compromise. The tragic hero is, by definition, a zealot, and Joan of Arc is no exception.

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[1] Shaw, 1946, Preface: 39-40.
[2] *Ibid.*, p.40.
[3] Shaw, 1946, V: 136.
[4] *Ibid.*, VI: 166.
[5] *Ibid.*, VI: 156-157.

History has judged Joan of Arc to be a saint and her prosecutors to be villains. Her judges are the antagonists in what is, after all, always and essentially the drama of *Saint* Joan; what light falls upon them is cast by her and, inevitably, her reputation is the yardstick against which they are measured. Joan's tragedy unfolds within the repressive machinery of the establishment that her judges represent and worldly power, both symbolic and actual, resides with them. The imbalance of power is extreme, entirely and manifestly present within dramatic representations of Joan's trial in the form of walls and chains, soldiers, weaponry, instruments of torture, the robes of office which the judges wear and which she does not, and the ponderous, inflexible rituals of the law as it is acted out upon the fragile and solitary figure of Joan. The inevitable circumstance of her death pervades and prejudices the proceedings which lead up to it; there can be no alternative conclusion to her trial.

The conflict between Joan and her adversaries constantly threatens to slide away from objective, ethical collision towards a subjective dialectic of good and evil. Pierre Cauchon, the chief prosecutor in Joan's trial, is frequently presented as a dark force of one sort or another -- a scheming "political" priest, a mercenary cynic trading French lives for English gold, a vicious authoritarian, a cold-blooded official. In *Joan of Lorraine*, Maxwell Anderson makes of his Cauchon a self-righteous avenger whose stated intention towards Joan is to "blacken her fame and destroy her name."[1] In Victor Fleming's film version of Anderson's play, *Joan of Arc* (1947), Cauchon is a caricature of a bad guy, a "worldly bishop" of the kind made familiar by Robin Hood films -- overweight, effete, calculating, dedicated to power and to money rather than to God. Roberto Rossellini goes even further with his condemnatory characterisation of Cauchon; in his highly stylised film *Giovanna d'Arco al Rogo* (1954), "Cauchon" becomes "Cochon" (or, in the original Italian-language version, "Porcus") and wears a pig's head. Dreyer's Cauchon is equally unpleasant, a fanatical ecclesiarch bent on crushing Joan and all that she represents. He is filmed throughout from a low angle and in

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[1] Anderson, 1950, II: 105.

harsh lighting so that his face, grotesquely scored with shadow, becomes almost demonic in its fury. But, in the end, Dreyer's film pulls back from this subjective extreme and restores to Cauchon some small measure of humanity which, in turn, serves to make Joan's fate still more poignant. As Joan makes the abjuration which ensures that she will go to the stake, the cruelty ebbs from Cauchon's face as he at last, and too late, comes to realize her integrity and her worth; he closes his eyes and turns away from her in a gesture of intense and unexpected grief. In Dreyer's film Joan's judges are, as David Bordwell remarks, "at least capable of recognizing the grace they lack."[1]

Shaw's *Saint Joan* is truly an antagonistic dialogue between equally weighted ethical forces. Shaw is never in any doubt about Joan's ethical integrity but instead chooses to focus his play upon the question of its real value to humanity and the impact that such an absolute position may have in the world. At the same time, the play acknowledges and accommodates the counterbalanced integrity of Joan's opponents. There are, Shaw's play suggests, perspectives and criteria other than Joan's spiritual idealism which must also be taken into consideration. "It is not enough to be simple," the Inquisitor warns Joan. "it is not enough even to be what simple people call good."[2] Joan is "good" in as much as she is sincere and virtuous but virtue such as hers constitutes an extreme which is dangerous in a world which cannot hope to live up to such high standards and which, Shaw strongly implies, is perhaps more needful of order and stability than it is of inspired idealism. Joan's ethical stance excludes a necessary pragmatism and, as much as that of the establishment which opposes her, it lacks both flexibility and humanity. She is radical both in substance and action, but hers is the irresponsible rebellion of the idealistic individual who is ignorant or careless of its wider implications and consequences. Joan's idealism is dangerous precisely because it acknowledges responsibility to no-one and nothing except God; unadulterated by practical, earthly concerns, it symbolically threatens to overturn all human order. Her rebellions are

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[1] David Bordwell, *A Filmguide to La Passion de Jeanne d'Arc* (Bloomington: Indiana University Press, 1973), p.53.
[2] Shaw, 1946, VI: 160.

manifold. She situates herself as a man and yet is not a man. She is a leader, both as a captain of soldiers and as a spiritual figurehead, and yet is ignorant of the practical concerns and responsibilities of leadership. Because she is a woman and of low birth, she cannot but upset the hierarchical structure of the established order. She asserts the national interests of France over and against the internationalism of the Church and of feudal society. She maintains personal knowledge of God -- the veracity of her Voices -- against the teaching and authority of the Church. She pits youthful idealism against the considered wisdom of age. It is the Inquisitor who questions the practical value of Joan's integrity and voices Shaw's partial justification of her prosecution:

> ".....the woman who quarrels with her clothes, and puts on the dress of a man, is like the man who throws off his fur gown and dresses like John the Baptist: they are followed, as surely as the night follows the day, by bands of wild women and men who refuse to wear any clothes at all.....Heresy at first seems innocent and laudable, but it ends in such a monstrous horror of unnatural wickedness that the most tender-hearted among you would clamour against the mercy of the Church in dealing with it."[1]

Here, Shaw's defence of the Inquisition closely follows that presented in a letter addressed to the Vicar of the Lord Inquisitor, Jean le Maistre, sent by Brother Jean Graverent on August 21st 1424 to confirm the addressee's appointment and reproduced among the documents concerning Joan's trial seven years later as part of the official validation of her prosecutors and her prosecution. "Heresy is a disease which creeps like a cancer," writes Graverent, "secretly killing the simple, unless the knife of the inquisitor cuts it away."[2] Joan's trial, Shaw's play suggests, was entirely justified within the historical context in which it took place; both its purpose and its enactment meticulously upheld the social, legal, and religious ideals of its time.

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[1] Shaw, 1946, VI: 149.
[2] Barrett, 1931, p.43.

Joan's is the impetuous, thoughtless idealism of youth and represents nothing less than the upheaval of all social order. As J.L. Wisenthal remarks, Shaw's play determinedly presents her not "only as a positive heroine, but also as a heedlessly destructive force confronting a civilization that is of value in spite of its blindness and rigidity."[1] For this reason, Shaw avoids rendering Cauchon as a one-dimensional anti-hero and instead portrays him sympathetically, as a compassionate man burdened with ethical and social responsibilities, who acts not as he wishes but as he must. Shaw's Cauchon is, in his way, also a tragic figure and, returning as a ghost in the Epilogue, describes to Joan his own condemnation by history:

> "They pursued me beyond the grave. They excommunicated my dead body: they dug it up and flung it into the common sewer.....they will see in me evil triumphing over good, falsehood over truth, cruelty over mercy, hell over heaven. Their courage will rise as they think of you, only to faint as they think of me. Yet God is my witness I was just: I was merciful: I was faithful to my light: I could do no other than I did."[2]

In all his dealings with Joan, Shaw's Cauchon is scrupulously fair. Even before she has been captured, he firmly rejects Warwick's attempts to foreclose the planned trial:

> "I will not suffer your lordship to smile at me as if I were repeating a meaningless form of words, and it were well understood between us that I should betray the girl to you. I am no mere political bishop: my faith is to me what your honour is to you, and if there be a loophole through which this baptized child of God can creep to her salvation, I shall guide her to it."[3]

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[1] J.L . Wisenthal, "The Middle Ages, the Renaissance and After" in *Shaw's Sense of History* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1988), pp83-91. Reprinted in Bloom, 1992, p.81.
[2] Shaw, 1946, Epilogue: 178-179.
[3] *Ibid.*, IV: 118.

Nevertheless, like the Inquisitor, Cauchon sees a terrifying disorder reflected in Joan's transgressions and idealism, but here the dialectics of age and youth, of social class, of "masculine" government and "female" anarchy, are to the fore:

> "What will the world be like when the Church's accumulated wisdom and knowledge and experience, its councils of learned, venerable, pious men, are thrust into the kennel by every ignorant laborer or dairy-maid whom the devil can puff up with monstrous self-conceit of being directly inspired from heaven? It will be a world of blood, of fury, of devastation, of each man striving for his own hand: in the end a world wrecked back into barbarism."[1]

Cauchon's arguments are fiercely reactionary, despite the compassion for Joan that he demonstrates elsewhere in the play. As Charles A. Berst remarks, Joan offers "the dangerous ember of independent spiritual inspiration to all mankind. Her spark of divinity forebodes a blaze of insurgency....."[2] Cauchon's sympathies for her as an individual are outweighed by the obligations of public duty. In his confrontation with Joan, he represents and prosecutes for an establishment which is both sanctioned and hidebound by centuries of tradition. A fear of change itself reverberates behind his words; there is no suggested possibilitity that society might learn from or in any way accommodate its rebels. An alternative social order is unimaginable to Cauchon; either things must stay as they are, in the stasis of continuity, or else there will be nothing but anarchy and destruction. The all-or-nothing polarities of tragic conflict are again apparent. Just as Joan must maintain her ethical substance intact or else lose all coherence, so too must the established social order championed by Cauchon maintain its integrity or be plunged into chaos. "Thus," notes Shaw, "an irresistible force met with an immovable obstacle, and developed the heat that consumed poor Joan."[3]

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[1] Shaw, 1946, IV: 121.
[2] Charles A. Berst, *Bernard Shaw and the Art of Drama* (Urbana, Chicago, London: University of Illinois Press, 1973), p.272.
[3] Shaw, 1946, Preface: 40.

It is ever the downfall of the tragic hero which breaks this stalemate; Joan of Arc's ethical stance must at last achieve the greater pathos because it has demanded and paid a blood-price. The notion of martyrdom, of the virtuous death, completes the hero's ethical gesture and makes it absolute. Earthly triumphs cannot compete with the pathos of such defeats. Maxwell Anderson's Cauchon astutely points out the need to avoid making a martyr of Joan for precisely this reason: "we must discredit her.....if we do not she will have beaten us."[1] Joan's execution violates the ethical balance between the individual and the State, bringing the raw physics of material power into play in its stead. Joan's opponents at last abandon their role in the ethical conflict to instead perform a singular, irrevocable, and unanswerable act of violence against her which simultaneously renders their guilt of a different order to hers -- a guilt which is no longer associated only with ethical culpability but which is now also qualitatively linked with morally reprehensible "criminal" action on the part of the Church and the State. "The tragedy of such murders is that they are not committed by murderers," comments Shaw. "They are judicial murders, pious murders....."[2] But they are murders nonetheless, translating the ethical impasse into an exercise of brute force against which the tragic hero has no honourable recourse and where the victory of might, not right, is assured. In the aftermath of the trial, Joan's death at the stake becomes an exaltation and an accusation. "The crime of the burning cannot be washed away," writes Ivor Brown. "If the judges were bought, the Church is less culpable since basely served. If they were true, faithful Churchmen, then the whiter their hands the blacker the Church."[3] Criminal guilt accrues either to Joan's prosecutors or to the establishment of which they are agents, while Joan herself achieves final absolution through death's annulment of all non-ethical potentialities, dissolving into her own ethical gesture so that she inhabits it entirely and conclusively.

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[1] Anderson, 1950, II: 105.
[2] Shaw, 1946, Preface: 63.
[3] Ivor Brown, "Saint Joan and Saint Henrik" in *Saturday Review* (London) April 5, 1924, pp349-50. Reprinted in Bloom, 1992, p.25.

Shaw's metaphysical Epilogue brings together all the main actors in Joan's drama in order that they may engage in a discursive *post-mortem* of the events in which they have participated. The device of the epilogue allows Shaw to transcend historical particularity and thereby render his characters as semi-abstract figures; placed outside time and historical circumstance they are, significantly, less their individual selves and less the agents of individualised ethical discourses. Instead, they become representative aspects of human society in general, of an insurmountable ontology of social relations, interests, and requirements. Of these human ciphers, Joan asks, "shall I rise from the dead, and come back to you as a living woman?"[1] The unanimous response, of course, is that she shall not, but it is all humanity which here rejects her, rather than the individual personalities who were instrumental in her earthly fate. The key passage is worth quoting at length:

> JOAN: What! Must I burn again? Are none of you ready to receive me?
> CAUCHON: The heretic is always better dead. And mortal eyes cannot distinguish the saint from the heretic. Spare them. [*He goes out as he came*].
> DUNOIS: Forgive us, Joan: we are not yet good enough for you. I shall go back to my bed. [*He also goes*].
> WARWICK: We sincerely regret our little mistake; but political necessities, though occasionally erroneous, are still imperative; so if you will be good enough to excuse me -- [*He steals discreetly away*].
> THE ARCHBISHOP: Your return would not make me the man you once thought me. The utmost I can say is that though I dare not bless you, I hope I may one day enter into your blessedness. Meanwhile, however -- [*He goes*].
> DE STOGUMBER: Oh, do not come back: you must not come back. I must die in peace. Give us peace in our time, O Lord! [*He goes*].[2]

Shaw's Joan disrupts the social order at every level; she upsets the religious establishment (represented by Cauchon and the Archbishop), the political establishment (represented by Warwick), the legal system (represented by the Inquisitor), and the everyday

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[1] Shaw, 1946, Epilogue: 187.
[2] *Ibid.*, p.188.

life of the common man (here represented by Dunois and De Stogumber). And yet, in spite of this final, metahistorical, and universal, litany of rejection and abandonment, Shaw's Joan remains unable to the last to comprehend its reasoning. While her former associates and adversaries are at least capable both of acknowledging Joan's virtues and their own failings - - capable, that is, of critical self-awareness and of informed realism -- Joan herself remains locked within her own uncompromising idealism. As Raymond Williams has remarked, "She represents the rejection of those tiresome facts of human behaviour which complicate the conception of Progress. She represents, that is to say, a fantasy."[1] It is a fantasy from which Shaw does not allow Joan to escape even after her death and metaphysical resurrection; she may represent Progress, but she is herself incapable of progressing. Joan's ignorance of humanity remains undiminished from beginning to end; more even than the establishment against which she is set, Joan exists in a state of stasis. She remains ethically intact at the expense of any development of either her character or her understanding. At the end of Shaw's play, her final plea remains one of despair and incomprehension: "O God that madest this beautiful earth, when will it be ready to receive Thy saints? How long, O Lord, how long?"[2] Joan's great strength -- her inability or refusal to compromise -- is also her great and abiding weakness: she remains forever herself, and waits for the world to change.

In *Saint Joan of the Stockyards*, Brecht offers an even more radical and politicized interpretation of the Joan figure, removing it altogether from its historical context and transplanting it to the Chicago slaughterhouses of the 1930s. All that remains of the historical Joan in Brecht's play is her religious idealism and her martyrdom. Brecht here invokes her not as an historical phenomenon but as a cultural one, using the familiar and predictable trajectory of her story to shift his play's dramatic tension away from the unfolding destiny of the heroic individual and onto socio-political and economic circumstance. Brecht makes use of the Joan figure's representational function in German classical literature in order, as Hans Mayer points out, to "confront the classicism of the bourgeoisie with the classicism of

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[1] Raymond Williams, *Drama from Ibsen to Eliot* (London: Chatto and Windus, 1961), pp150-151.
[2] Shaw, 1946, Epilogue: 189.

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socialism,"[1] mirroring and undermining the former by repeatedly echoing phrases from Schiller's *Die Jungfrau von Orleans* and Goethe's *Faust* within a politically apposite framework. Throughout his play, Brecht refers back to the classical tradition and equates it with capitalism, translating the romantic sentiments of *Sturm und Drang* literature into the language of Marxist-Leninist ideology and the gestures of revolutionary political action. Joan Dark represents a number of Romantic ideals -- those of metaphysical innocence, of tragic heroism, of an ethical stance which disregards secular politics and ordinary, earthly humanity in favour of more abstract ideals -- which Brecht attacks by means of her identification in his text as a spiritual supplicant and by her eventual transformation into a revolutionary heroine. Mauler is a composite stand-in for the self-interested Dauphin and the oppressor Cauchon, but here the tyrant is a factory-owner and the repressive ideology of the establishment is that of capitalism.

The classical concept of innocence as a particularly virtuous form of unworldliness is devastated in Brecht's play through its juxtaposition with, and effect upon, the socio-economic subjectivity of Mauler's meat-factory workers. Joan's "innocence" here constitutes an almost criminal political ignorance and Brecht represents it as a frivolous and absurd privilege of class which is not only useless in itself but which also serves the interests of the capitalist oppressors in its wilful and superior blindness to concrete socio-political actualities. Joan Dark is an officer of the "Black Straw Hats" (the Salvation Army), an evangelist whose concern for the spiritual welfare of the meat-factory workers operates without consideration for their material well-being. As Ingvald Raknem remarks, "The girls of the Black Straw Hats group act on purely unselfish motives; but they are engrossed in their mission and their charity work to the exclusion of all other interests."[2] The dualistic nature of their religious beliefs, which postulates the absolute division of body and soul, not only overlooks the plight of the oppressed workers but also functions in favour of their exploiters. "Innocence," in the Brechtian analysis, is a by-word for an active ignorance which is politically dangerous

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[1] Hans Mayer, "The Scandal of Joan of Arc" in Bloom, 1992, p.144.
[2] Raknem, 1971, p.219.

because its message and consequence is social passivity. "Strive upwards, not downwards," Joan Dark tells the workers. "Work for a good position up above, not here below."[1] By urging the workers to accept their lot on earth without complaint in the hope of being rewarded in the next life, Joan Dark's evangelistic religiosity plays -- albeit unwittingly -- straight into the hands of the bourgeois bosses and bankers who exploit them. Her innocence/ignorance repeatedly results in her failing to recognize the dynamics of the political circumstances in which she has becomes embroiled and causes her to mistrust the workers' own accounts of the injustices that they continually suffer: "I don't think you have any right to be malicious and to believe without proof that a man like Mauler can be inhuman,"[2] she self-righteously tells the leaders of the workers. Joan's holy innocence manifests itself as mere credulity and leads her into mistake after mistake; when Mauler tries to disperse the picket-line by spreading a false rumour that the plant is to re-open, Joan foolishly takes the news in good faith:

> A WORKER: How do we know if it's true that jobs are to be had again?
> JOAN: Why shouldn't it be true if these gentlemen say so? People don't joke about things like that.[3]

But Brecht's Joan -- unlike Shaw's -- is a fully sentient character and therefore capable of both learning and changing. While Shaw's heroine remains blind to everything but her own idealism, Joan Dark progresses from a state of sanctimonious ignorance to one of political awareness and responsibility. As the conflict between the workers and the bosses intensifies, she at last realizes not only the true nature of the situation but also the role that she herself has played in its perpetuation:

> "I spoke in every market place
> And my dreams were numberless but
> I did harm to the injured
> And was useful to those who harmed them."[4]

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[1] Brecht, 1962, II.d: 97.
[2] *Ibid.*, IX.e: 160.
[3] *Ibid.*, IX.g: 168.
[4] *Ibid.*, XII: 193.

Joan Dark's social education ends her innocence; her redemption, after all, comes not from her religiosity but from her politicization. In the play's final scene the monologue that she utters, in the knowledge that she is dying, is not so much an attack upon capitalist ideology as upon the spiritual ideals to which she herself has subscribed and which she now realizes are nothing more than empty platitudes:

> "Oh, let nothing be counted good, however helpful it may seem
> And nothing considered honourable except that
> Which will change this world once and for all: that's what it needs.
> Like an answer to their prayers I came to the oppressors!
> Oh, goodness without consequences! Intentions in the dark!
> I have changed nothing.
> Swiftly vanishing without fear from this world
> I say to you:
> Take care that when you leave this world
> You were not only good but are leaving
> A good world!"[1]

Joan Dark's death is meaningful because it is brought about not by her religious idealism -- her "innocence" -- but as a result of her political education and subsequent decision to involve herself in revolutionary action alongside and on behalf of the oppressed workers; it is a secular martyrdom. In this, Brecht's Joan opposes Shaw's heroine as much as she does Schiller's. Where Shaw partitions his martyred saint until humanity has improved enough to merit her, Brecht's Marxist beliefs lead him to do the opposite with his heroine: it is the saint who must change because saintliness is in itself without value unless it is harnessed to political action executed in the cause of the common good. The transformation of Joan Dark from ineffectual do-gooder into revolutionary heroine and martyr is achieved when she realizes this; it is righteous political action, not self-righteous religious ministration, which offers the only hope for earthly salvation. Brecht's play takes the Hegelian concept of ethical

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[1] Brecht, 1962, XII: 194.

culpability into the political arena, translating innocence as political ignorance and interpreting both as equally negative and self-reflective qualities which serve only to perpetuate social injustice. Innocence, in the Brechtian analysis, may be a religious ideal but it is a social evil.

In the ethical tragedy the deterministic factors which might suggest innocence are, in the first instance, present in the interior ethical compulsion of the tragic hero which brings him, inexorably, into conflict with exterior agents. Oscar Mandel has argued that the overwhelming nature of the compulsion which drives the tragic hero towards his doom is such that the hero may be regarded as little more than the hapless instrument of its power, dispossessed of "free will" and consequently of the objective ethical culpability which otherwise constitutes his guilt.[1] He may, therefore, be considered to be innocent. Such an argument is problematic, however, since it requires a tangential division between a compulsion that is specific and interior to an individual and the individual himself. It demands that the compulsion be understood as alien to, rather than as an intrinsic aspect of, the character of the tragic hero and it supposes that a clear distinction can be made between the individual and his ethical or emotional makeup. Any such distinction is, however, doomed to be unsatisfactory since that compelling inner force which drives the tragic hero necessarily constitutes the central part of his identity as it is revealed in the tragic narrative.

The compelling force in the tragedy of Joan of Arc is God, since it is clear throughout her story that she believes herself to be acting at God's command, but this statement requires considerable qualification. God is never present in Joan's story in the way that, say, Zeus (acting through Apollo) is the tangible and exterior determinant of Orestes' fate in Aeschylus' *Oresteia*. God is invoked in Joan's drama not as a *deus ex machina* meddling in the affairs of men but is rather as an "absent presence" indicated by faith, a void into which are projected the contradictory understandings of Joan and of the Church. Joan attracts our sympathy not

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[1] See Mandel, 1973, "The Question of Free Will II," Ch.16, pp134-137.

because we know her interpretation of God's will to be the correct one (though we may believe it to be so) but because we understand her to be sincere in that interpretation. The pathos of the tragic Joan figure is heightened by the concrete uncertainties which surround her ethical stance; her faith illuminates not the nature of God but rather her own integrity which is that of an individual who allows nothing but that faith to guide her and who maintains it intact despite, or perhaps because of, the silence of the Divine. The absence of any exterior corroboration of Joan's righteousness, of any invocation of God as the puppet-master of human affairs, confirms the deterministic elements of her tragedy as entirely interior compulsions intrinsic to Joan's individual identity; as has already been remarked, Joan acts as she does because she is what and who she is. Her tragic situation emerges out of four elements specific to her drama, all of which are of a fundamentally ethical nature:

1. Her actions are synonymous with the demands of her Voices (which are the exteriorised expression of her ethical substance).

2. She believes that her Voices come from God (who is absent from her drama).

3. She maintains the truth of her Voices over and against the contradictory teachings and express instruction of the Church (bringing about the ethical conflict which is the dynamic of her tragedy).

4. She maintains the truth of her Voices and continues to be guided by them despite knowing what the consequences to herself will be (she accepts full responsibility for her actions in order to maintain her ethical integrity).

The story of Joan of Arc is, then, first and foremost an ethical tragedy. Joan must be considered "guilty" in the Hegelian sense because the deterministic elements which bring about her tragic downfall reside primarily in the ethical substance which, as we have already seen, itself constitutes the Joan figure. Innocence has no place in the ethical dynamics of her tragedy, but this does not mean that it is necessarily excluded from elsewhere within the tragic narrative. The ethical tragedy allows innocence to enter as part of the metaphysics which describe the tragic individual in ways which serve to emphasize the purity of the

motives which prompt him to engage in "wrongful" tragic action. Some intimation of innocence is necessary in order to make the tragic hero a sympathetic figure; he must bring his downfall upon himself and yet seem not entirely to deserve the suffering that he endures as the result of his own actions. In tragedy, then, the objective "guilt" of the hero is a necessary feature of his ethical substance while "innocence" is associated with subjective interpretations of his rightfulness and purity of motive.

CHAPTER 3

THE METAPHYSICS OF INNOCENCE

In the tragedy of Joan of Arc, metaphysical constructions of her innocence (variously encoded in her virginity, her youth, her rustic unworldliness) are employed in support of her ethical integrity but -- crucially -- they do not determine it; it is clear, for example, that the ethical dynamics of her story would hold true regardless of whether or not her virginal status was detailed within the narrative. Nevertheless, the matter of Joan's virginity -- which evidences her holy innocence and her goodness -- is intrinsic to her story as both mythic metaphor and historical fact and it serves a number of symbolic functions. The integrity of her flesh parallels the integrity of her ethical identity and signals the holy purity of her motives, remarking the triumph of the soul over the body which underlies the central importance of virginity in western Christianity's dualistic tradition. As with the Madonna and Christ, Joan's virginity is stressed primarily in order to subordinate her corporeality and elevate the status of her soul so that she conforms to an ideal of human spiritual perfection which makes possible the notion of direct spiritual communion with the incorporeal God.

The suppression of all sensual desire -- a suppression integral to Christian religious life, with its emphasis upon fasting, chastity, and austere living -- is a key aspect of the story of Joan of Arc, present both in the constant references to her virginity and in the recounting of the physical hardships that she endures on the campaign trail and in prison at Rouen. Joan's story is, from start to finish, characterised by emotional, spiritual, and physical rigour. In Jacques Rivette's film *Jeanne la Pucelle* (1994), her drama unfolds within a wide and hostile winter landscape of bare trees, frost-whitened fields, frozen mud, and bleak, isolated farmsteads -- a landscape from which all luxuries and comforts are absent. Joan sleeps wherever the night finds her and eats nothing but a communion diet of bread dipped in wine. Rivette's realistic representation of her harsh lifestyle excludes any element of romance or

spectacle; Joan endures cold, hunger, exhaustion, is grievously wounded in battle, and is apparently sustained throughout by little more than her burning faith. The rejection of physical comforts and the rigorous denial of all but the most basic physical necessities serves the symbolically important function of entirely subordinating Joan's flesh to the discipline of her spirit. Her physicality -- like that of a soldier -- is dedicated to her purpose, to her holy crusade against the English. Her virginity, in this context, is the most resonant of a number of narrative devices which serve to prioritise Joan's spirituality at the expense of her physical self; her mission, her ethical purpose, is all encompassing and she has no life outside it.

The supernatural import of Joan of Arc's story is frequently enhanced by a sometimes punitive asceticism which sets her apart from ordinary humanity and -- more importantly -- from the base physicality that is often, in the western Christian tradition, particularly associated with women. Marina Warner provides a succinct summary of the misogyny which underlies Christianity's idealisation of female virginity:

> "Through the ascetic renunciation of the flesh, a woman could relieve a part of her nature's particular viciousness as the Virgin Mary had done through her complete purity. The life of self-denial was seen as a form of martyrdom, and the virgin was encouraged to suffer physically. For in times of persecution, martyrdom made amends for nature's wrongs, and proved the faith of the victim.....Through virginity and self-inflicted hardship, the faults of female nature could be corrected."[1]

The idealised model of the ascetic, suffering virgin was at its most elevated and extreme in the Middle Ages, but its ghostly form still haunts the twentieth century texts relating Joan of Arc's story. Its resurrection is partly explained by the historical nature of Joan as a subject, but nevertheless it feeds into a still-living cultural tradition which requires chastity and ascetism of its holy men and -- particularly -- its holy women. In the West's cultural imagination, the pleasures of the flesh, redolent of man's fall from grace in the Garden of

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[1] Marina Warner, *Alone of All Her Sex* (London: Quartet, 1978), pp68-69.

Eden, remain irreconcilable with a religious calling. From the Virgin Mary through to Mother Theresa of Calcutta, the idea of female saintliness has remained inextricably bound up with notions of sexual purity.

But Joan's virginity does not only announce the subjugation of her weak female flesh; it also serves to mark her independence from men and it distances her from those constructs of female identity which describe women only in socio-sexual relation to men. Unlike the "wife" or the "mother," the virgin is uniquely situated outside the familial context, described, essentially, by what she is not. She is pre-sexual and, as such, is frequently interpreted as a-sexual; she exists in a temporary state of socio-sexual indeterminacy and "unbeing" which affords her some small, but significant, freedom from the restraints of socially constructed concepts of femininity. In Anouilh's *The Lark*, Warwick describes Joan's virginity as an ephemeral and magical state of virtual genderlessness:

> "No woman would have spoken quite in the way you did. My fiancée in England, who's a very innocent girl, reasons exactly like a boy herself, and, like you, there's no gainsaying her. There's an Indian proverb.....which says it takes a virgin to walk on water.....Being a virgin is a state of grace. We adore them and revere them, and yet, the sad thing is, as soon as we meet them we're in the greatest possible hurry to make a woman of her: and we expect the miracle to go on as if nothing had happened. Madmen!"[1]

Here, the virgin is "like a boy," has supernatural powers, and is possessed of a particular holiness which makes her worthy of reverence. She is not a woman but may be "made" a woman through sexual intercourse with a man, whose penetration of her body is a violation which simultaneously destroys her as an autonomous (semi-genderless) being and creates her (female and subordinate) social identity. It is, then, specifically the loss of virginity which at once brings about both womanhood and subjection, which Warwick understands as virtually synonymous concepts. The woman, by implication, can no longer possess the positive "masculine" qualities which he has specified and attributed as the peculiar property

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[1] Anouilh, 1990, II: 95.

of the virgin; the virgin as subject becomes the woman as object through the sexual act which results in the loss of her maidenhead.

The association of female virginity with "masculine" virtues has a long history which can be traced back to the warrior maidens of classical mythology, whose virginity both denotes their independence from men and allows them to possess the "masculine" qualities of aggression and martial skill which enable them to preserve themselves *virgo intacto*. In the case of the Amazons, they exist, quite literally, as a "race apart," female and yet not "women" as the word is understood in its traditional, social application. The self-mutilation evidenced in the Amazon's amputation of her own breast marks her self-determined subordination of her female biology to her "masculine" purpose; it announces to the world that she exists not for motherhood but for war. The concept of the Amazon and the Amazon-like virgin implicitly acknowledges conventional notions of "womanhood" as socially determined, associated with the cultural interpretation of gender and the cultural construction of gender roles; in a society without men, there can be no 'women' in the conventional, familial sense. The Joan figure brings together and embodies both the Christian and classical models of the virgin as at once holy and aggressively independent; she represents a Judaeo-Hellenic idea of goodness which, Marina Warner points out, rests "on virginity, expressed in the imagery of war."[1]

Joan's career as a soldier both suggests and is suggested by the ancient association of virginity with masculine qualities; her virginity, as surely as her cross-dressing, symbolises the exclusion of the "feminine" from her story by denying her an "adult" (hetero)sexuality and, consequentially, a clearly delineated gender; the conventions of masculinity and femininity fail adequately to describe her in her pre-sexual/a-sexual/bi-sexual state. She is not a man, but neither has she undergone the (hetero)sexual initiation which would "make" a "woman" of her; her (hetero)sexual innocence configures an androgyny which is associated with her spiritual status as much as it is with her male dress. In Shaw's *Saint Joan*, La Hire describes her in terms which place her incarnate holiness entirely outside gender: "It was not a soldier,

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[1] Warner, 1992, p.235.

but an angel dressed as a soldier."[1] Margery M. Morgan notes that in Shaw's play Joan's virtue, "far from being rooted in her female nature, is identified rather with her revolt against that nature."[2] The "female nature" that Morgan refers to, however, is perhaps better described as the social construct of female subjection, since it is precisely the subordinate state of (heterosexual) womanhood that Shaw's Joan resists by means of her virtue and her male dress.

In Jacques Rivette's *Jeanne la Pucelle*, Joan's virginity is less associated with her virtuousness than with a baseline sense of her independence and autonomy, which are in turn associated with the male dress which allows her to transcend the constraints of her gender. Imprisoned at Rouen, Joan signs the confession and puts on a long dress of eggshell blue. But this sartorial sign of her surrender to the Church also returns her to the object status of her womanhood. Immediately, her male guards begin to bully and abuse her. They run their hands over her body, chain her to her bed (though refrain from actually raping her), spit the word "Putain!" at her, and humiliate her by refusing to allow her to go to the toilet: "Piss yourself!" Later, a young Burgundian lord enters her cell and attempts to molest her; he has paid the guards to give him access to her and Joan is saved from this final violation only by the timely arrival of the more honourable Earl of Warwick, who intervenes on her behalf. The next morning sees Joan dressed once again in her male clothing -- an act of defiance for which she knows she will die. In Rivette's film, Joan's fiercely guarded virginity is far more than simply a signifier of her holy goodness. It represents her sovereignty over her own flesh, her refusal to be wholly objectified; it constitutes a last frontier of the self beyond which she will allow no-one to trespass. She chooses death because the loss of self that her surrender entails is, in the final analysis, a fate more terrible than the fire which awaits her.

Christian tradition interprets virginity as sexual unknowingness and equates sexual unknowingness with innocence, but in the story of Joan of Arc the notion of innocence which

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[1] Shaw, 1946, II: 88.

[2] Margery M. Morgan, *The Shavian Playground: an Exploration of the Art of George Bernard Shaw* (London: Methuen, 1972) p. 243.

is grounded in her virginity is removed from the attendant "feminine" affectations of modesty and passivity which characterise, say, the Virgin Mary (who is, in any case, miraculously both virgin and mother, both without and within the family). Joan's innocence is of a markedly different variety; it is an active innocence, knowingly employed in the service of her spiritual mission and invoked to describe and enhance her spiritual status. The element of knowingness in Joan's story, present in her self-conscious and culturally-aware invocation of the symbolic power of her own virginity in the name -- Jeanne la Pucelle -- that she chose for herself, makes the notion of her innocence problematic; it is an instrument of her secular power as well as the determining agent through which the symbolic cohesion of her spiritual and corporeal identity is achieved. The contradiction encoded in the nature of Joan's innocence underlies the irony behind Shakespeare's referring to her as "Joan the Pucelle" in *Henry VI Part One* and then punning with the phonetic similarity and opposed meanings of "pucelle" ("maid") and "pussel" ("whore")[1]. Voltaire is similarly ironic on the matter of Joan's virginity, titling his epic burlesque *La Pucelle d'Orléans* and yet describing Joan as a strumpet by nature and claiming that "the greatest of her exceptional labours/ was to protect her virginity for a year."[2] Both men interpret the name by which the historical Joan called herself as evidence of her cynical appropriation of purity and innocence for reasons of politics and self-interest; they seize, correctly, upon Joan's virginity as the central element of both her spiritual and earthly power and they attack it in order to diminish her. Joan's virginity, Marina Warner notes, is "essential to her role of saviour"[3]; she must be understood to be free of sin in order to qualify as the redeemer of her people, echoing Christ in her person as well as in the messianic nature of her mission. The symbolic importance of her virginity is reflected in the titles of a number of the films and plays which tell her story -- Ucicky's *Das Mädchen Johanna*, Rivette's *Jeanne la Pucelle*, Schiller's *The Maid of Orleans*, Audiberti's *Pucelle, piéce en trois tableaux* -- though, as a result of her canonisation in 1920 and of the general

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[1] *Henry VI Part One*, ed. by Norman Sanders, (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1981), I.iv: 66.
[2] "La Pucelle d'Orléans" in Voltaire, *Œuvres Completes de Voltaire*, ed. by Jeroom Vercruysse (Geneve: Institut et Musee Voltaire, 1970), Vol.7, p.259.
[3] Warner, 1992, p.239.

devaluation of virginity in the modern world, the prefix "saint" is more commonly used in the twentieth century, subsuming her identification as a holy virgin into the wider, official nominative of her all-round holiness.

In Robert Bresson's film *The Trial of Joan of Arc*, Joan's virginity is elevated to the status of a theme through its construction as the battleground on which the war for her spirit is waged. Bresson's film directly links Joan's virginity to her holiness; it not only marks her out as a saint but also dedicates her body as well as her spirituality to Christ -- much as nuns are dedicated. Joan's trial and martyrdom are narrated within and towards the idea of her union with Christ -- a union that is, Bresson's film suggests, to be consummated in the flames of Joan's pyre, which bring about her ascension to the kingdom of heaven. In a scene that takes place in her cell, she enters into the following exchange with a young priest:

> Priest: Enough lies. You are not a maid.
> Joan: I say I am. Too bad if you don't believe me.
> Priest: You belong to the devil, not to God.
> Joan: I belong to our Lord Jesus Christ.

Here, Joan's virginal status is explicitly cited as the factor determining her identification as an agent of good, while the concepts of good and evil are further subjectified through their identification with the persons of Christ and the devil. The central importance of Joan's virginity is reiterated in the scene which immediately follows this dialogue. Three women, with their backs turned towards the camera, walk out of the frame. There is a cut to a shot of Joan sitting on her bed; the camera moves in on her as, in a slow gesture of humiliation and outraged modesty, she raises the sheet to cover her body and her face below the eyes. The scene cuts again to a shot of Warwick and Cauchon in the stairway. Warwick tells the bishop that the women have confirmed Joan's virginity and Cauchon replies that it is Joan's virginity which gives her her strength. Warwick's solution is both pragmatic and profane: "If it's her virginity that gives her strength, we'll make her lose her virginity." But Joan's purity inspires a fear of sacrilege in less brutalized and irreligious men. Watching Joan through the spyhole

that is used intermittently throughout the film to frame Joan within a jagged angle of light in an otherwise black screen, a young English soldier remarks: "I'd thrash her with pleasure, but her virginity.....I'd never strip her of those clothes which protect her. No-one in the world could." Warwick responds darkly: "The bishop and his churchmen could."

After Joan has abjured in order to save herself from the stake, Bresson's film stresses that it is specifically her desire to preserve her virginity which inspires her to resume her male dress and retract her confession: "When I put on this dress, I was beaten," she tells her persecutors by way of explanation. "An English lord tried to molest me....." The film at first links Joan's ethical integrity with her physical integrity, but then goes on to oppose the concepts of ethical guilt and metaphysical innocence. As she awaits her death, Joan says, "I want to die but I don't want to burn. My body is not corrupt. It should not be reduced to ashes." Here, the annihilation of her flesh corresponds with the annihilation of her ethical substance but, while the latter is presented as the inevitable consequence of her actions, the film at the same time emphasises the metaphysical innocence that is evidenced by the purity of her body, which has not merited destruction. Nevertheless, it is through the destruction of her flesh that Joan must reconcile herself with her destiny. As she is dressed in a white penitence gown -- which marks her surrender to her fate and, imagistically, resembles a wedding-dress -- she asks, "Where will I be tonight?" and then answers her own question: "God willing, I shall be in Paradise." Outside, she runs with little tripping steps towards the stake, as if she is impatient to complete her journey into the next world. Joan is chained to the stake, the fire is lit, and she utters her last words and ends them by saying "Jesus". Then, as Amedee Ayfré notes, this "very pure body literally fades away into the sky....."[1]

In other texts, Joan's virginity is invoked not only as evidence of her holiness but also in order to explain and justify the spiritual power that she wields in the secular arena; her purity inspires fear in men as much as it does reverence. In Anouilh's *The Lark*, Joan's virginity is at the centre of what Yolande enthusiastically describes as her "exceptional power," but it also

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[1] Amedee Ayfré, "The Universe of Robert Bresson" in Ian Cameron (ed.), *The Films of Robert Bresson* (London: Studio Vista, 1969), p.22.

constitutes a sexual challenge and threat to masculinity. When Yolande orders Charles to receive Joan at court, he responds by assuming that Joan's business with him is sexual rather than political and he feebly attempts to excuse himself from such an encounter with her:

> "I don't like virgins. I know, you're going to tell me again that I'm not virile enough. But they frighten me. And, anyway, I have Agnes, who still pleases me quite well enough."[1]

The passage underlines Charles's weakness by stressing his unmanliness but it is specifically virgins, rather than women in general, who challenge masculinity and here reveal it to be lacking. Clearly Charles is man enough with Agnes, his mistress; the virgin, however, represents a tougher test of his manhood, and a greater likelihood that he will be found wanting. He shies away from the prospect of sexual failure that Joan's virginity here represents.

In Jacques Rivette's *Jeanne la Pucelle*, Joan's holy innocence inspires not masculine fears about their sexual performance but rather a terror of sexual sin in her comrades-at-arms. As she and her companions ride from Vaucouleurs to the Dauphin's court at Chinon, Jean le Metz and another soldier dismount to relieve themselves in the woods. As they stand and urinate, Le Metz cynically remarks of Joan that "Virgin or not, by the end of the journey she will have been visited by all the troops." That night Joan and her companions sleep in a haybarn and Le Metz lies awake and restless beside her; when the other soldier wakes and asks him why he cannot sleep, Le Metz replies "Every time I close my eyes I see hell in front of them. I am being punished tonight for the filth that I spoke." "Me too," the second soldier responds. From there on in the film, Le Metz remains convinced of Joan's holiness, if not of her mission, and ranks among her most faithful and devoted followers.

Ingrid Bergman's Joan, in Victor Fleming's *Joan of Arc*, similarly wins over her followers by virtue of her virtue. She is both pure and a puritanical evangelist; unhelmeted, clad in

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[1] Anouilh, 1990, I: 38.

dazzling silver armour, the light always falling full onto her face so that her features have the clarity of guilelessness and resolve, she moves among her army of rough-and-ready soldiers and informs them that there is to be no swearing, no gambling, no women, no drinking, and that "every man must go to confession before we march." Although at first the soldiers laugh and jeer incredulously at her, her radiant goodness, self-assurance, and insistence that they regard themselves not just as an army but as God's own army eventually wins her their grudging acquiescence and respect. Joan's purity confers spiritual authority upon her; it outweighs her femaleness and gives her the moral right to command men. Her dominance is assured by the reverence that her holy innocence inspires and by her concomitant ability to strike the fear of God into the hearts of her followers.

Joan's purity casts a brilliant light which illuminates and exposes the sinfulness of others and, in most cinematic representations of her, this light is not only metaphorical but is rendered actual. In the films of Dreyer, Fleming, and Preminger, Joan's face is constantly flooded with light -- so much so that she seems almost incandescent. Cecil B. De Mille's *Joan the Woman* opens with a shot of Joan working at a spinning-wheel at her parents' home in Domrémy; she raises her arms and is framed in a *fleur-de-lys* of light, her arms outstretched in a posture of crucifixion. Strong direct lighting is used in films about Joan of Arc just as it is in much religious art and iconography -- in order to invoke a sense of the divine within man, to make manifest the radiance of the pure soul. At the same time, it is employed to give a sense of the subject's openness and integrity; direct lighting appears to reveal all there is to be known of that which it illuminates and the exposed, nakedly expressive face testifies to the sincerity of the subject's actions and the veracity of his words. Bright light is associated, in time-honoured tradition, with holiness, with innocence, with guilelessness, truthfulness, nobility, and integrity; in contrast, the faces of Joan's persecutors are frequently lit from the side or from below so that shadow darkens and partially conceals them, etching cunning and evil design upon their features. In Dreyer's *The Passion of Joan of Arc*, the concrete and abstract dialectics of the narrative are visually centred upon the

conflictual play of light and shadow. The chiaroscuro of good and evil is at its most evident in the scene in which Joan, alone and miserable in her cell, is cheered by the sight of a cross of shadow which has been cast across the floor of her prison by sunlight flooding through the window. As Joan smiles through her tears and resumes weaving the straw crown that she has been making, the sequence cuts back and forth from her cell to another room in which the priests form a dark, conspiratorial huddle as they forge a letter to her from King Charles in order to trick her into signing the confession. Loyseleur enters Joan's cell, his shadow blotting out the cross of shadow which the scene has already established as the simple symbol of her faith and inspiration. Though Loyseleur claims that he is a double-agent and that he is secretly Joan's ally, exhorting her to place her trust in him, the play of light and shadow has already alerted the viewer to his duplicity. He belongs to darkness, as surely as Joan belongs to the light, and he is not to be trusted.

Metaphysical constructions of innocence are reinforced in the tragic narrative by the fact that the tragic hero is usually young (although there are, of course, a number of notable exceptions to this). Youth lends itself easily to radical ethical and idealistic stances and permits the translation of complex ideas and situations into simple, polarised forms, since youthfulness itself neither suggests nor requires sophistication or subtlety. Such simplicity is characteristic of many modern representations of the tragic Joan figure, in which, Marina Warner comments, she often functions to produce a "reduction of conflict"[1] which is achieved by the exclusion of moral dilemmas and ambiguities from the constructed narrative of her story. Joan's transgressions and gender-defying precocity are defused and explained away as strategies adopted out of necessity in order that goodness may assert itself in a world of sinfulness and evil; the opposition of her judges remarks not their integrity but their corruption, cynicism, and lack of spiritual depth. The ethical dynamics of her tragedy are downplayed -- though they are never entirely excluded -- in versions such as Fleming's *Joan*

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[1] Warner, 1992, p.267.

of Arc and Preminger's *Saint Joan* (1957), which insert emphatically subjective concepts of innocence and guilt, of good and evil, into the objective ethical conflict. The element of simplicity is reinforced by the fact that the tragic hero is also usually fated to die young; he does not live long enough to betray, compromise, or otherwise complicate, his ethical position. As the ethical dynamics of tragedy favour a youthful protagonist, so too do the metaphysics of innocence; the traditional association of youth with radical idealism and integrity is overwhelming and universal.

Almost all representations of Joan of Arc play heavily upon the fact of her youthfulness and upon the semantic association of youth with innocence. Cecil B. De Mille cast the middle-aged and well-rounded opera diva Geraldine Farrar in the title role of *Joan the Woman*, but De Mille's mature Joan is very much an exception in cinematic representations of the Joan figure. More usually in cinema, Joan is youthful without being excessively childlike. In Dreyer's film, Falconetti as Joan is young, trusting, and vulnerable, but is also characterised by a resolute and intense spiritual passion which is distinctly unchildlike. In Bresson's film, Joan consistently exhibits an asceticism and self-control which in no way suggest the spontaneity and emotional openness associated with childhood, while Ingrid Bergman, in both Fleming's *Joan of Arc* and Rossellini's *Giovanna d'Arco al Rogo*, is too womanly and physically mature to represent a childlike Joan. Those films in which Joan's youthfulness is more emphatically stressed have tended to favour the model of the wilful adolescent rather than of the wholesome, pure child. In Otto Preminger's *Saint Joan*, the seventeen-year-old Jean Seberg plays her as a beautiful girl-boy who, like Peter Pan, seems to hover in an androgynous limbo between childhood and adulthood (see Figure 1, p.66). Marc de Gastyne's *La Merveilleuse Vie de Jeanne d'Arc* (1928) has Simone Genevois (another seventeen-year-old) playing Joan as an unholy mixture of 'Twenties flapper and tomboyish Amazon -- again, the effect is one of idealised and androgynous adolescence rather than of childlikeness. The form of the adolescent allows innocence to be configured as an *active* idealism; the child's innocence, in contrast, is more commonly associated with

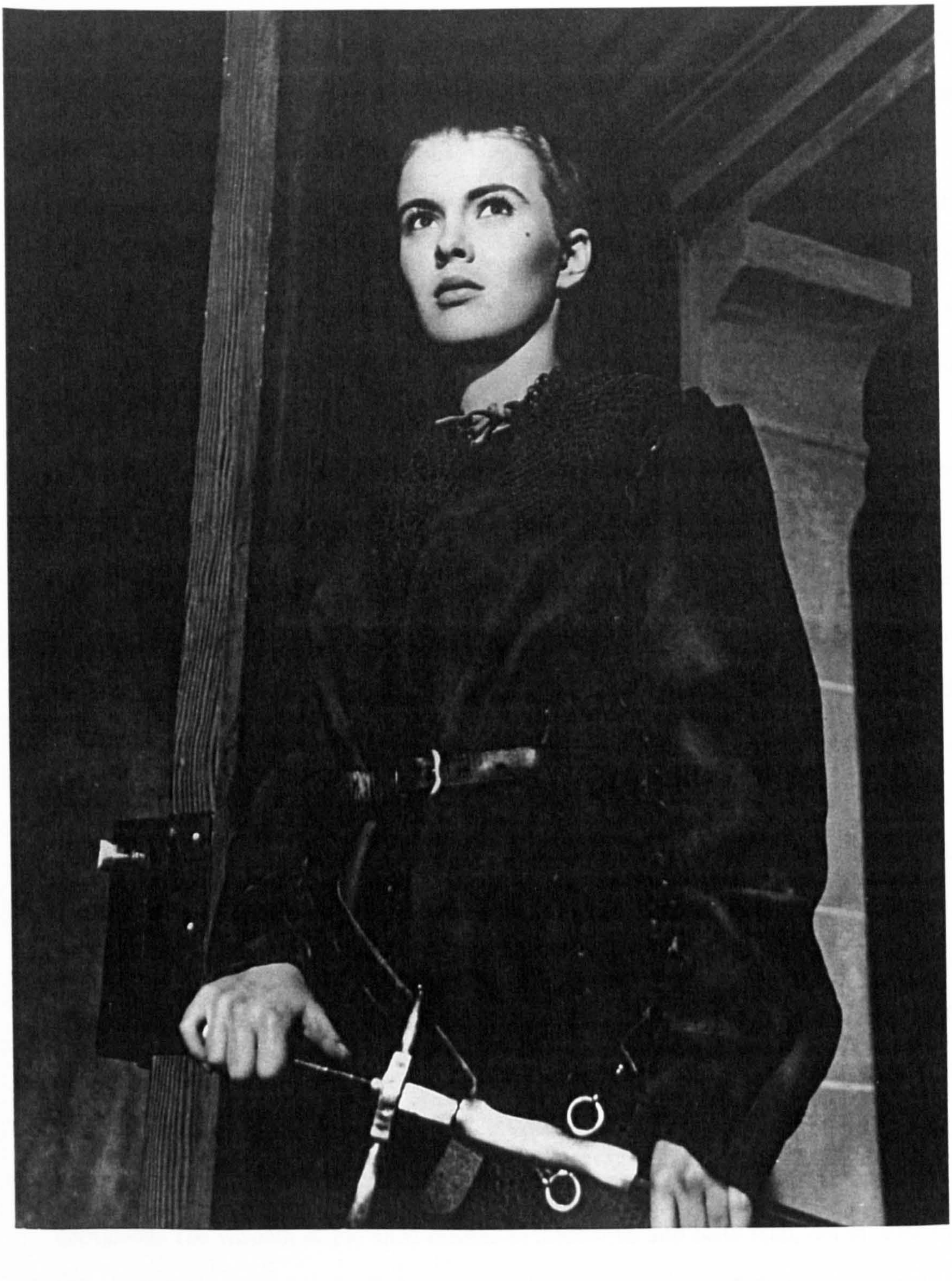

Figure 1. Jean Seberg as Joan in Otto Preminger's *Saint Joan* (1957).

(BFI Stills, Posters, and Designs).

passivity and subjectivity. Cinema's preference for precocious adolescent or "young adult" Joans, even where her early life is represented, is perhaps explained by the lack of credibility that a wilful, artful and yet childlike figure might inspire.

In play-texts -- unlike cinema -- the visual image of the child is non-existent and therefore cannot inadvertantly undermine the narrative; on stage, however, in contrast to her textual construction, Joan is almost always played by adult women. Nevertheless, the Joan figure in play-texts is frequently constructed, and described by other characters, as a child -- though without actually being one. The rejection of an adult identity for her serves further to shift the emphasis of her tragedy away from objective ethical conflict and towards the subjective dialectic of innocence and guilt. Joan is represented as a species of "marvellous child," the construction of her innocence and her "native genius" unhindered by adult knowledge or by suggestions of worldliness[1]. In the figure of the child, the metaphysical qualities by which innocence is inferred find their fullest expression; the child represents and is characterised by ignorance, emotional openness, honesty, simplicity and trustfulness, the absence of sexual experience and knowledge. The child here represents a Christian ideal of goodness which arises out of the belief that the corporeal world is innately corrupt and corrupting; only children and the childlike, by virtue of their ignorance of and immunity to the drives and desires of adulthood and by virtue of their limited exposure to the sinfulness of others, may exist within it in a state of purity unstained by sin. Like the Fool of God, a figure which both suggests and is suggested by the concept of the holy child, children are understood to possess wisdom without experience and insight without knowledge -- qualities which are upheld as romantic ideals even as they are wrecked upon the rocks of adult cynicism and corruption. The wisdom of the child resides in innocence and blind faith, not in worldliness. When Shaw's Joan rages naively at the intransigent lack of faith exhibited by the experienced captain of war, Dunois, who doubts her decision to attack Orléans, her argument focuses upon the conflict between youth and age, between faith and cynicism, between

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[1] See Warner, 1992, Ch.12, pp237-254.

intuition and experience: "your older and wiser heads are fatheads," Joan informs him, "they have made a fool of you, and now they want to make a fool of me too.....Do you not know that I bring you better help than ever came to any general or any town?"[1] Dunois, a seasoned warrior of twenty-six, responds by giving Joan a lesson in battle strategy; it takes a miracle to convince him that Joan's urgency is not mere childish impetuosity but the measure of her considered faith in God and in her own mission.

The identification of virtue with childhood sets up the counter-image of adulthood as itself a state of moral corruption. In opposition to the figure of the childlike Joan and in almost all reiterations of her story, are arranged the very adult sophisticates of the Dauphin's court at Chinon and of the courtroom at Rouen -- adults who, for one reason or another, for good or for bad, will use, betray, abuse, and finally destroy, her. In this environment, she often resembles the proverbial lamb which has strayed amongst wolves. In Maxwell Anderson's play, Chartier foresees the fate which awaits her: "I see now that you're a child -- with a child's heart and no knowledge of the place you set your face toward. You don't deserve what will happen to you, Maid from the frontiers. There is nothing in that court but evil."[2] The identification of Joan as a child configures her faith, naivety, simplicity, and innocence; against this model of virtue are set the degenerate aristocrats of the Dauphin's court, whom Chartier goes on to describe as "the dead, the dying and the vultures"[3] and whose presence contaminates and corrupts all who enter into their world. The warning is two-fold; it presages both a physical *and* a moral threat to Joan. It is childhood alone which here represents a vision of human perfection, and such perfection is all the more precious for its fragility and rarity; the adult, by contrast, exists in a state of moral entropy.

The virtuous ignorance which constitutes Joan's innocence is not, however, associated only with her identification as a child but also with the more specific identification of her as a *peasant* child. Her innocence and simplicity are associated with her youth which, in turn, is

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[1] Shaw, 1946, III: 107.
[2] Anderson, 1950, I: 38.
[3] *Ibid.*

associated with an idealised concept of nature and of pastoral society. The young Joan of Arc who watched over the sheep for her father, who helped her mother with the spinning, whose voices and visions first came to her in the quiet countryside near her home in Domremy, haunts the texts of Anouilh's *The Lark*, Shaw's *Saint Joan*, and Victor Fleming's *Joan of Arc*. In Méliès' early fifteen-minute film, *Jeanne d'Arc*, Joan's voices appear to her in the forms of angels as, dressed in an appropriate Little Bo-Peep frock, she watches over her father's sheep by the woods. Marc de Gastyne's *La Merveilleuse Vie de Jeanne d'Arc* opens with intertitles relating the historical circumstances which gave rise to Joan's career; then begins a sequence of shots illustrating the idyllic rural simplicity of her home of Domremy -- sentimental images of the little village houses and cottages, of trees and country lanes, of a man on horse-back riding unhurriedly along. Later, the experiences recounted by the French soldiers who are received as guests in the d'Arc family home are related in flashbacks which show a pastoral, decent, peaceful and God-fearing France besieged by the English army; shots of wanton pillage and destruction, of English soldiers ransacking a church, and of bloody battle-scenes, are intercut with images of the countryside burning. After Joan has informed her father of her voices and their message to her, the flashback sequence resumes once again; English soldiers ravage the countryside, peasant refugees flee with their belongings, forming a long, unhappy trail with their haywagons and ox-carts. Joan and her holy mission configure a *Völkisch* identification of the Nation with the land. It is this semi-pagan, spiritual, pastoral, and idealised vision of France that Joan represents when she arrives at the Dauphin's decadent court at Chinon. Joan is the Spirit of France; the Dauphin and his debauched, self-interested followers represent the betrayal of a nationalist ideal which holds the land itself sacred. As youth confronts age, so too does rustic simplicity and virtue confront urban sophistication and corruption through the medium of the Joan figure. In Fleming's *Joan of Arc*, the King's failure to assist her assault on Paris sends her to the royal court in search of him. There, she is horrified to discover that he has cynically signed a treaty with the Burgundians in return for gold. "Men hate corruption," the vehemently naive Joan

tells him. "And God hates it." "I don't know," replies the worldly and mercenary Charles. "But men take to it very naturally." In every version of Joan's story, it is this betrayal which brings about Joan's defeat and capture. Her mission fails because her earthly masters prove unworthy of her goodness and France is lost not by its ordinary citizens but by their cynical, self-seeking, and ungodly rulers.

In his play *The Lark*, Jean Anouilh makes the most of Joan's idealised rustic childhood: "I am sitting in the field," she says during her trial, "thinking of nothing at all. God is good and keeps me safe and happy, close to my mother and my father and my brother, in the quiet countryside of Domrémy....."[1] Joan's reminiscences are sentimental almost to the point of idiocy, a wistful invocation of the landscapes of childhood which she utters inanely and pathetically while she is on trial for her life at Rouen castle. In Anouilh's play, Joan's innocence is manifested not only in her simplicity but also in repeated statements describing her outright and self-confessed stupidity: "I am not intelligent, my lord," she informs Cauchon. "I am a peasant girl, the same as any other in my village."[2] Later in the play, she makes the same point again and even more emphatically to Warwick: "But I am ill-bred, I am stupid."[3] Such statements emphasise Joan's innocence at the expense of her intellect; they evidence her sincerity and purity by strongly implying that she possesses neither the wit nor the sophistication for the intrigues of corruption. She is good because she is not clever enough to be wicked. Ladvenu patronisingly but sympathetically reiterates the point in her defence: "My lord, Joan is talking to us in her rough and ready language about things which come instinctively from her heart, which may be wrong but are surely simple and genuine."[4] The implication of such a weighted division between action and intent is, as Marina Warner has observed, that "knowledge and experience are no longer media of goodness, but have become in themselves contaminating."[5] The stupid and ignorant are innately closer to God

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[1] Anouilh, 1990, I: 2.
[2] *Ibid.*, II: 61.
[3] *Ibid.*. II: 96.
[4] *Ibid.*, II: 62.
[5] Warner, 1992, p.266.

than are the clever and the wise. "Of course Heaven's full of dunces," Anouilh's Joan informs La Hire. "Hasn't our Lord said so? It may even be they're the only ones who get in: the others have had so many brains to sin with, they never get past the door."[1]

The '*Völkisch*' nationalist sensibility romanticises nature and, sure enough, nature is everywhere associated with the Joan figure. The conflict between the individual and the State, between the nation and its rulers, is reconfigured and reiterated in the metaphysics of innocence and guilt through the the dialectical oppositions of rusticity and urbanity, of simplicity and sophistication, of man in his "natural" state and man corrupted by political society and artifice. The opening sequence of Victor Fleming's *Joan of Arc* juxtaposes the enclosed and crowded space of the courtroom, in which Joan sits surrounded by the oppressive formality of legal and religious ritual, with a flashback to the Domremy countryside in which Joan was brought up. A heavy-handed long shot shows an idealised technicolor landscape of rolling hills bisected by a winding river and, in the middle-distance, a haywagon trundling through a golden cornfield. The shot changes to show Joan, clad in a simple peasant dress and shawl, her hair modestly concealed beneath a white headscarf, running up a wooded hillside to pray at the summit beneath a brilliant blue sky. Meanwhile, a voice-over fills in the background to Joan's story, stressing her simplicity and her devotion to God; she is, the male voice informs us in a transatlantic accent, "a half-literate child deep immersed in religion." The image of Joan filmed from a low angle against an expanse of blue sky trailed with white clouds occurs over and over again in Fleming's film (see Figure 2, p.72), a leitmotif which visually associates her with wide open spaces and, literally and metaphorically, with the heavens themselves. Throughout the film, the sky mirrors the mood of the action -- a sunlit and dazzling blue to reflect Joan's holy purpose, streaked with angry reds and golds as she launches a second, successful siege upon Orléans. Joan belongs to nature, and nature itself is at one with God's will.

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[1] Anouilh, 1990, II: 72.

Figure 2. Joan (Ingrid Bergman) on the campaign trail in Fleming's *Joan of Arc* (1948).

(BFI Stills, Posters, and Designs)

Birds are frequently employed as symbols in retellings of Joan's tragedy, serving to indicate holiness and the fundamental uncontainability of the human spirit. The function of birds in Celtic and classical mythology -- as supernatural messengers, as the returning souls of the dead -- is echoed in their symbolic associations with the Joan figure. The dove -- the universal western symbol of peace and love -- figures prominently in association with her. In Dreyer's film, the scene of Joan's martyrdom is intercut with shots of doves settling on the roof of a church and then scattering upwards into the sky -- images which symbolise both the affront to innocence that Joan's death represents and the flight of her soul as she burns. Thirty-five years later, Robert Bresson used almost identical shots of doves to much the same effect in his own film.[1] In Shaw's *Saint Joan*, Dunois, awaiting Joan's arrival, glimpses two kingfishers darting along the banks of the Loire. His page's desire to capture the marvellous birds inspires his master's anger and thematically presages Joan's captivity later in the play; "Let me catch you trying to trap them," Dunois warns the boy, "and I will put you in the iron cage for a month to teach you what a cage feels like."[2] The kingfisher represents not only freedom but is also a symbol of the Virgin Mary and Dunois addresses a prayer to it: "Mary in the blue snood, kingfisher color: will you grudge me a west wind?"[3] It is, of course, Joan who later fulfils his prayer and grants Dunois his west wind -- a miracle which identifies her, through the medium of the bird, with Mary herself.

The symbolic identification of birds with freedom in relation to Joan is made even more explicitly by Jean Anouilh, who pointedly titled his play *The Lark*. "This lark, singing in the sky, while we all take aim to shoot her down: that seems very like France to me," remarks

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[1] Bresson was apparently anxious to disassociate his film from Dreyer's masterpiece, which he disliked intensely, and to discourage comparisons. He famously remarked, "I understand that at the time this film was a small revolution, but now I only see all the actors' horrible clowning, appalling grimaces that make me want to flee." ("Propos de Robert Bresson," *Cahiers du Cinéma*, Vol.XII, No.75 [October, 1957] p.9). Although markedly different in style and mood, Bresson's version of Joan's drama nevertheless borrows much of its symbolism as well as some techniques from Dreyer's film. The device of the spyhole, the repeated close-ups of Joan's chained feet, the dissonance of various shots, the doves in the martyrdom scene, and the closing shot of the empty stake are just a few examples.

[2] Shaw, 1946, III: 106.

[3] *Ibid.*

Warwick of Joan. "Or at least like the best of her.....every now and then a lark sings in her sky, and the fools and the rogues can be forgotten."[1] Anouilh employs the songbird as a metaphor which remarks the spiritual aspirations and potential of Man -- which are realized in Joan -- even as it inspires and reveals his propensity for destruction. In the play's final paragraph, the lark configures Joan's spiritual resurrection in nature and the indomitability of her immortal soul and all that she represents as Cauchon mawkishly announces that "the real end of Joan's story.....isn't the painful and miserable end of the cornered animal caught at Rouen: but the lark singing in the open sky. Joan at Rheims in all her glory. The true end of her story is a kind of joy. Joan of Arc: a story which ends happily."[2] Joan as an autonomous individual is completely devoured by the metaphor that Anouilh has chosen to represent her cultural and spiritual significance; her experience is no longer her own but is instead the property of all mankind. Joan's human identity is rejected and destroyed so that it can be resurrected at the level of the symbolic as "a story which ends happily"; thus, her tragedy becomes a fairytale, stripped of its disturbing implications and violent conclusion.

In Dreyer's *The Passion of Joan of Arc*, the "natural" is invoked as the language of true spiritual faith. The extraordinary number of close-ups and extreme close-ups in the film, coupled with Dreyer's insistence that none of his actors wear any make-up, presents the naked human face as a "natural" landscape upon which psychological, interior "truths" are exposed, in the first instance, through facial expressions. Whilst the close-ups of the naked, "natural" face work in favour of Falconetti's guilelessly expressive Joan, illuminating Falconetti's extraordinary performance of Joan's besieged innocence and signalling the emotional honesty of her responses, the same technique works against the cast of male grotesques that Dreyer assembled to play Joan's judges, and does so to such an extent that the film risks devaluing their tyranny by overstating their raw physical unpleasantness. As David Bordwell points out, Dreyer's film "builds upon a narrow set of physical polarities: old (priests, gravedigger) vs. young (Jeanne, Massieu, Ladvenu, the children in the crowd); men

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[1] Anouilh, 1990, II: 56-57.
[2] *Ibid.*, II: 103.

vs. women; flesh (Jeanne's especially) vs. metal (the soldiers' weaponry, the torturer's apparatus).....worked skin (the wrinkled, mottled priests) vs. smooth skin (Jeanne, the young priests)."[1] Human physicality, filmed through a realist lens, is here constructed as the natural embodiment of human "nature." The machinations of the human heart and soul are, quite literally, "written on the body".

The depth of Joan's innocence and integrity is further revealed in Dreyer's film through her association with natural phenomena which recall Christian motifs and symbology and which serve to identify nature with the life-force. The cross that the sunlight casts across the floor of her cell underlines the simplicity and sincerity of her faith; the flowers that Joan glimpses when the priests take her into the graveyard, in order to remind her of her own mortality, evoke life and beauty in the midst of death and decay; the crown of straw that Joan weaves with her own hands serves as an expression of her faith and of her rustic simplicity, and at the same time directly parallells her fate with that of Christ. Later, Joan's guards make use of the crown in order to torment her, pulling it down hard at an angle on her head and tickling her face with an ear of corn. The camera frames Joan thus, as the Fool of God, the straw crown substituting for Christ's crown of thorns and the ear of corn for the centurion's spear (see Figure 3, p.76). Joan's judges, in contrast, are associated not with nature but with the hollow constructions of human artifice and by the symbols of material power, encoded in the priests' robes of office, in the written word, in the geometric formations of the weapons and walls with which they enforce their authority.

In the film's final sequences, leading up to and following Joan's martyrdom, the dialectic semantics of innocence and guilt, of the individual and the State, of spiritual faith and religious authority, of women and men, of nature and human artifice, become still more pronounced. As Joan receives final communion and prays, crosscuts show the crowd converging on the castle and the soldiers taking up their positions along the battlements. Joan leaves the castle, dressed in a white penitence gown and with her hair shorn, framed

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[1] David Bordwell, *The Films of Carl-Theodor Dreyer* (Berkeley, Los Angeles, & London: University of California Press, 1981), p.87.

Figure 3. Joan (Renée Falconetti) Christlike in Dreyer's *The Passion of Joan of Arc* (1928).

(BFI Stills, Posters, and Designs)

between twin ranks of spears, and more cross-cuts show pigeons scattering upwards into the sky, flowers, a baby feeding at its mother's breast. As the first flames flicker in Joan's pyre, the camera pans across the distraught crowd, composed mainly of peasant-women, which is held back by heavily armed and impassive soldiers who loom so large that the camera rises and falls rhythmically to contain them within the frame. Joan slumps forward and is engulfed by smoke and flames; there is a cut to a man in the crowd, who cries out, "You have burned a saint!" The threat of violence which has been implicit throughout Joan's trial is now realized as the soldiers lay into the panicking crowd with their heavy boots and maces. Spears rain down from the castle ramparts, a cannon is fired into the unarmed civilian crowd. The images ricochet from one brutality to another; the camera swoops and soars to convey a sickening sense of uncontrol. A woman runs, clutching a lamb to her chest. A boy kneels on the ground beside the motionless body of his fallen mother. The soldiers' assault against this peasant population of women and children, old men and cripples, is -- like Joan's trial -- constructed as an attack upon innocence itself. The film's final shot is of the empty stake and, in the lower left corner of the frame, a cross -- symbolic reminders of human goodness amidst the desolation wrought by human evil.

CHAPTER FOUR

ALONE WITH GOD: EXCLUSION AND EXALTATION

"He shall be the greatest who can be the most solitary, the most concealed, the most divergent, the man beyond good and evil, the master of his virtues, the superabundant of will,"[1] wrote Nietzsche in *Beyond Good and Evil*[1]. Nietzsche's doctrine of the Superman expounds a notion of exile as a state of being, as a condition inherent in the perfect individual whose struggle for mastery over himself is intrinsically interior and solitary and whose very virtuousness excludes him from the ordinary run of humanity. The Superman is one whose virtues are entirely the property of his own singular nature, who is careless of and ethically superior to the social concerns and conventions to which lesser men must conform, whose independence is absolute. His exile is not, in the first instance, imposed upon him from without but is rather a condition born of his own self. That which distinguishes the Superman from other men is also that which sets him apart; he represents humanity in its highest evolution but is fated to stand alone at a summit which the mass of humanity may strive to attain but can never reach. Dedicated to the perfect expression and fulfilment of his own will, he cannot permit himself to make those ethical surrenders which would allow him to remain within human society. He rejects the counsel of others as they, seeking to maintain the conceit of their own mediocrity, also reject both his counsel and his insight. His exclusion is twofold; he is an exile by virtue of his consciousness of his own singular nature, and he must suffer himself to be exiled by a society to which he represents both an uncomfortable ideal and an unanswerable challenge.

That the Joan figure shares many characteristics with the Nietzschean Superman is a commonplace observation. Her mystery, her transgressiveness and deviance from the ordinary, the absolute intransigence with which she maintains her elevated and extreme

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[1] Friedrich Nietzsche, *Beyond Good and Evil*, trans. R.J. Hollingdale (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1990), p.144.

ethical stance, the pitiless self-knowledge that she possesses and which at the last compels her to choose death before life, the extraordinary resilience she demonstrates as she relentlessly strives for the pure expression of her own will -- these are the qualities which mark her out as one destined for greatness and for estrangement. In every reiteration of her myth, Joan of Arc is an innately lonely figure. From the first moment when her voices speak to her in the quiet Lorraine countryside, the singular nature of her destiny sets her apart from the rest of humanity. Claimed by supernatural agency and herself possessed of a formidable will, Joan is irreversibly banished from the familiar world of parental home and local community. In this, the opening movement of her career as one of society's exalted exiles, her isolation is imposed not from without but from within; it is her own compulsion, an overwhelming dynamic property of her interior being, which casts her out from the world to which she has so far belonged and which earmarks her for greatness, for loneliness, and for martyrdom. Destiny unmothers her; a stranger to her former self and to the familiar certainties her past life she must find her way in the world as one innately apart, as one bereft of any counsel but that of the voices which speak to her alone and which are themselves both cause and aspect of her isolation.

No other living being can share or influence the progress of her destiny. She can rely upon nothing but her own judgement and the counsel of her voices: "I must think what to do by myself," Joan says in Maxwell Anderson's *Joan of Lorraine* after her voices have visited her for the first time. "I must try to find my way alone."[1] Jean Delannoy's *Fémina* film-sketch *Jeanne*[2] (1954) relates an episode which occurs just before Joan's last battle, its narrative focusing upon a peculiar little miracle that she performs even as her followers express their growing lack of faith in her mission. Joan insists that she must march on Compiègne and, as a consequence, she is deserted by all but a handful of her soldiers. As she sets off towards what will be her final battle, she is caught in a great wash of light while all around her is

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[1] Anderson, 1950, I: 16.

[2] The second of three sketches, each with a different director, which together comprise a single film titled *Fémina* or *Destinées* (English title: *Love, Soldiers, and Women*).

plunged into semi-darkness; her companions become silent silhouettes of shadow in the gloom outside the radiance which embraces Joan. In this strange moment, in which she is caught in a supernatural dimension outside the real world, her voices speak to her and inform her that this battle is the last thing that they will ask of her. Joan asks if it is because she is to die that this is the last thing they ask of her, but this time her voices do not answer her and, abruptly, the supernatural light vanishes and she is thrust back into the corporeal world. Destiny compels her along a solitary path; even her voices cannot breach her isolation. Her supporters and companions can never become more than participants in what is always and essentially a destiny that she must fulfil alone; swept along for a while by the exuberant current of Joan's fate her associates are, like Christ's disciples, released from its hold as it arrives at its destination and irrevocable resolution. Delannoy's film sketch ends with a poignant and portentous image of Joan on horseback, holding her banner aloft against the sky; at the bottom of the frame, a haywagon blazes with fire. Joan rides on towards her lonely and terrible fate.

In Victor Fleming's *Joan of Arc*, Joan's solitary communications with her visions and voices are repeatedly employed in ways which emphasise her estrangement; she alone sees and hears them, she alone is answerable to them. Betrayed by Charles, who has accepted money from his enemies in exchange for an end to hostilities, she prays to God for guidance. Isolated in the frame, filmed from above and surrounded by darkness, her face is radiant with light. Gradually the camera pulls back to reveal that she is kneeling alone in an empty cathedral. Behind, above, and around her stretch vast depths of vaulted shadow, metaphorically suggesting her loneliness, despair, and uncertainty. In this austere environment, in which her prayers remain unanswered, she vows that she will no longer wear her shining silver armour but will instead go to battle dressed as plainly as any other soldier. Her path is no longer one of glory and comradeship; from now on, it will be hard, bleak, and lonely, marked by defeats as well as by victories. Her spiritual communion with her voices is

over; from now on, she must fulfil her destiny with nothing to guide her save her own blind faith.

In Jacques Rivette's *Jeanne la Pucelle* Joan sleeps, eats, journeys and fights alongside her comrades and yet, as in Fleming's film, she prays alone; her regular and solitary communion with the supernatural describes a relationship with her God and her fate that others can neither enter nor fully comprehend. As she waits for an audience with Robert de Baudricourt in *Les Batailles*, the first half of Rivette's 5½ hour epic, Joan regularly prays in a little chapel in the town outside the castle. The camera stays outside the door, looking into but not invading her privacy. The chapel is filled with a soft golden light; Joan kneels before a simple altar, on which stands a small statue of Jesus flanked by two altar candles. Later in the film, as Joan and her companions journey towards Chinon, the shot is repeated except that this time the "chapel" is part of a complex of huge farm buildings and the "altar" is a bare wooden table. Again the camera keeps its distance; Joan is a tiny figure in the background while, in the foreground, her companions roast a spitted rabbit over an open fire. There is a cut to a lingering medium shot of Joan then the camera tracks round so that the wall, which separates Joan's impromptu place of worship from the rest of the building, gradually moves across the frame until Joan herself is no longer visible. The distance of the camera from the solitary Joan, the slow movement positioning the wall in the frame so that eventually it entirely excludes her, the shot of the rabbit roasting over the fire, imagistically presage her isolation, imprisonment, and martyrdom in the second half of the film. Joan is never far from her companions in *Les Batailles*, but at the same time she is essentially always entirely alone.

Women feature more prominently in *Jeanne La Pucelle* than they do in any other version of Joan's story. At Vaucouleurs, Joan stays at the house of Catherine le Royce for two or three weeks. When Robert de Baudricourt finally agrees to send her to the Dauphin at Chinon, Joan goes first to the armourer's forge where, using a polished metal breastplate as a mirror, she starts to cut off her own hair; it is Catherine le Royce who comes in, takes over,

and finishes the job for her. At Poitiers, where Joan is examined by representatives of the French Church, it is Yolande d'Aragon, the Dauphin's mother, who, by giving Joan her blessing, instates her as the French monarch's champion. The scene between Yolande and Joan, in which Yolande does almost all the talking, leaves us in no doubt as to whose agency gives Joan her influence upon the House of Valois. Later, outside Orléans, Joan is again among women, staying in the home of Dame Boucher and her daughter Charlotte. Here, Joan is at her gentlest; warm, tactile, chivalrous, and relaxed. In the bedroom, Charlotte fetishistically tries on Joan's body armour and is reprimanded by her mother; Joan's possessions are treated with wonder and with reverence, as is their owner. When it is time for Joan to leave, it is the women of the house who dress her in her armour and who then watch from the balcony, much as women usually watch their battle-bound menfolk in such scenes, as she rides away.

Throughout the film, Joan is endorsed, admired, and supported by women, until her imprisonment and trial deny her female company. Women are active in her destiny both as her supporters and as her protectors. But, ultimately, both her career and her fate are beyond their control. The scene of the Dauphin's coronation at Rheims cathedral is explicit in its exclusion of all women except Joan from the main part of the building; as the ceremony gets underway, the camera lingers on a crowd of well-dressed women which silently surges against the row of heavily-armed soldiers which acts as a barrier against the women's participation. Joan, the only woman who is permitted entry to the ceremony, is alone among men and isolated from her own sex. Her power is fragile and, because she is a woman functioning in an all-male environment, it is dependent upon male indulgence and without real sanction. Later in the film, after her capture, Joan is imprisoned by Jean de Luxembourg at the castle of Beaurevoir and once again we see her among women. Jean's aged aunt, Jeanne de Luxembourg, like Yolande d'Aragon, is a woman of real substance and power who offers Joan her support and protection. Jeanne forbids her unpleasant nephew to hand over Joan to the English, threatening to cut off his inheritance if he disobeys her. But the power of

women is limited to them as private individuals and it has no public domain; they are excluded from the institutions of patriarchal order and denied whatever authority men wish to claim for themselves. When Jeanne de Luxembourg suddenly dies, the nephew that she disliked takes legal possession of all that she owned -- including, of course, Joan, whom he promptly sells to the highest bidder. Over and over again in Rivette's film, Joan is supported by women and betrayed by men. Her isolation is configured in and by the politics of gender.

In "The Revolutionist's Handbook" in Shaw's *Man and Superman*, the revolutionary socialist Jack Tanner concludes that "unless we are replaced by a more highly evolved animal -- in short, by the Superman -- the world must remain a den of dangerous animals among whom our few accidental supermen, our Shakespears, Goethes, Shelleys and their like, must live as precariously as lion tamers do, taking the humor of their situation, and the dignity of their superiority, as a set-off to the horror of the one and the loneliness of the other."[1] In *Saint Joan*, Shaw's vision of the ethical Superman is fully, and rather more critically, realized in the figure of Joan of Arc. "A genius is a person who, seeing farther and probing deeper than other people, has a different set of ethical valuations from theirs, and has energy enough to give effect to this extra vision and its valuations in whatever manner best suits his or her specific talents,"[2] he notes in his Preface. The position of Shaw's genius is, like that of Nietzsche's Superman, an intrinsically lonely one; the perfect and superior individual is inevitably out of step with all humanity; the acuity of the genius' or Superman's own insight and the depth of his ethical integrity denies him the complacency and the capacity to conform with which lesser men are able to comfort and reassure themselves. His very existence is a battle, with himself and with the world, to become and remain entirely true unto himself; he is engaged in an interior struggle that can neither be shared nor fully expressed and which puts him at odds with the rest of humanity. Like Nietzsche's Madman,

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[1] George Bernard Shaw, *Man and Superman* (Westminster: Archibald Constable & Co., 1903), "The Revolutionist's Handbook", VIII: 215.
[2] Shaw, 1946, Preface: 12.

who bears the news that God is dead to a people incapable of grasping the enormous significance of such an event and unwilling to attempt to do so,[1] he must carry the burden of his insight alone. The Superman is doomed to explain mankind to itself in terms that it neither understands nor wishes to understand; he represents an ideal that will be ever rejected because it has the failings of all humanity inscribed in the very substance of its perfectness. At best, like Nietzsche's Madman, he will be ridiculed; at worst, like Joan of Arc, it is his fate to be ostracised and silenced.

"Joan's isolation is a recurring motif in the play," notes the critic J.L. Wisenthal of Shaw's *Saint Joan*. "Each of the last three scenes -- the cathedral scene, the trial scene, and the Epilogue -- ends with the desertion of Joan by those around her, so that each time she stands utterly alone."[2] In Scene V, Joan stands in the ambulatory of Rheims cathedral in the company of Charles, the Archbishop of Rheims, and her comrades-in-arms Dunois, Bluebeard, and La Hire. Charles has just been crowned king of France and he and Joan's companions are striving to persuade her that the coronation ceremony represents the triumphant completion of her mission. Now that he has legitimised his claim to the French crown, the weak-willed Charles wishes to cut his losses and put an end to the fighting; he announces that he intends to sign a treaty with his enemy, the Duke of Burgundy. Dunois tacitly agrees and roughly informs Joan that her "little hour of miracles is over"[3]; the Archbishop warns her of the fate that awaits her should she continue to ignore the counsel of her commanders and spiritual directors. One by one, Joan's companions dissociate themselves from her mission and urge her to do the same. She rejects their advice out of hand; the voices which still command her obedience have made no pronouncement releasing her from her mission to drive the English from French soil, and theirs is the only

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[1] Friedrich Nietzsche, "The Joyful Wisdom", trans. Thomas Common, *The Complete Works of Friedrich Nietzsche*, ed. by Dr. Oscar Levy, (London: George Allen and Unwin Ltd., 1914), Vol.10, pp167-169.

[2] J.L. Wisenthal, *The Marriage of Contraries* (Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1974) p.190.

[3] Shaw, 1946, V: 134.

advice that she will listen to. The Archbishop's response to her obstinacy is a definitive pronouncement of her abandonment and isolation:

> "The army will disown you, and will not rescue you. And His Majesty the King has told you that the throne has not the means of ransoming you.....You stand alone: absolutely alone, trusting to your own conceit, your own ignorance, your own headstrong presumption, your own impiety in hiding all these sins under the cloak of a trust in God. When you pass through these doors into the sunlight, the crowd will cheer you. They will bring you their little children and their invalids to heal: they will kiss your hands and feet, and do what they can, poor simple souls, to turn your head, and madden you with the self-confidence that is leading you to your destruction. But you will be nonetheless alone: they cannot save you."[1]

The Archbishop speaks as an insider, with the confidence of one whose place within the social order is assured and whose authority and identity, in the first and the last instance, belong to and serve the institution of the Church. His words to Joan are both a warning and a threat. Stubbornly insisting upon the supreme authority of her own inner light, Joan puts herself outside and in conflict with all human society save that disenfranchised element which recognizes her as a popular heroine -- the superstitious, fickle, flattering, and ultimately powerless, mass of the common people who will, in the Archbishop's view, urge but not defend Joan's folly and who will encourage her wilful rebellions but not share in her downfall. Isolation is here both a characteristic of Joan's stance and a threat employed against her in order to bring her back into the common fold; Joan must submit to the authority of the Church and the State or else lose her right to exist as a member of society. Far from signalling her acceptance within the social order, her popularity among the masses is explained and neutralized in terms of the very exaltation which evidences it. Joan is revered by "poor simple souls" not because they accept her as one of their own but precisely because she is one apart, neither this thing nor that, uniquely and unequivocally Other. Like

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[1] Shaw, 1946, V: 138.

Christ, she is regarded by the people as their saviour, chosen by God to lead and redeem them and, crucially, to be sacrificed for them. In the Archbishop's analysis, her exaltation by the common people only confirms and exacerbates the loneliness of her position.

Of all her associates, only Joan is without a concrete power-base, an official function, or an assured place within ordinary society. The Archbishop belongs to the Church, which has already begun to turn its back on Joan; the feeble, vacillating Charles at last has his kingdom to govern and has no further use for his charismatic and uncompromising champion, whose persistent wilfulness is now becoming a problem and an embarassment for the House of Valois; Dunois, Bluebeard, and La Hire have their ordinary careers as soldiers to return to, and they make it clear to Joan that they will follow her only so far and no further. Of them all, only Joan has no identity or meaningful existence outside her holy mission to drive the English out of France. But here Joan's isolation is remarked not only by her impolitic obstinacy but also by the uncompromising virtuousness which at once sets her apart from ordinary humanity and locks her within her solitary destiny. Her loneliness is the source, as well as the result, of her ethical integrity and spiritual strength. Her great speech towards the end of the scene is both defiant and accusing:

> "There is no help, no counsel, in any of you. Yes: I am alone on earth: I have always been alone.....Do not think you can frighten me by telling me that I am alone. France is alone; God is alone; and what is my loneliness before the loneliness of my country and my God? I see now that the loneliness of God is His strength: what would He be if He listened to your jealous little counsels? Well, my loneliness shall be my strength too; it is better to be alone with God: His friendship will not fail me, nor His counsel, nor His love. In His strength I will dare, and dare, and dare, until I die."[1]

In the trial scene which follows immediately after, Joan's prosecution is conducted by Cauchon with the preferred aim of reintegrating her into ordinary society. Again, Shaw presents Joan's isolation as a consequence of her own inability and refusal to compromise

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[1] Shaw, 1946, V: 138-139.

her integrity. It is not Cauchon's goal to exclude or destroy her, but he cannot do other than maintain her submission to the authority of the Church as a necessary condition that she must fulfil before he can achieve his preferred objective of readmitting her to the Church and so saving both her life and her eternal soul. In the process, however, he greatly underestimates Joan's sincerity and resolve. "We have striven for your salvation to the verge of sinning ourselves," Cauchon informs her, addressing her sternly as if she were a stubborn child: "we have opened the door to you again and again; and you have shut it in our faces and in the face of God."[1] The ball is in Joan's court; from here onwards, she alone must bear the burden of responsibility for her fate at the hands of others. Nevertheless, for all Cauchon's efforts to save her by persuading her to surrender and save herself, the structure of the trial itself reinforces her isolation and subjectivity. In a climate of inevitability, it progresses towards the formal pronouncement of Joan's exclusion. As the object of the legal process, she stands absolutely alone before the plurality of voices raised against her. She is one against many, a woman alone amongst men, with no-one to counsel or defend her. No witnesses are called to testify on her behalf and her imprisonment ensures that her isolation is absolute, denying her all communication with her supporters and former comrades-in-arms. Her confinement ensures that all that she represents, her history, deeds, and influence, are safely contained within the limits of her quarantined individuality. Her trial moves inexorably towards the final pronouncement of her excommunication -- of her expulsion from the Church and thereby from all Christendom. "And now we do cast thee out, segregate thee, and abandon thee to the secular power,"[2] Cauchon declaims after Joan has retracted her confession. The sentence passed upon her by the Inquisition is expressly one of exclusion, but there is no "outside" to which the outcast can be banished. Cast out by the Church, Joan's fate is that of all fifteenth century excommunicates; she will be put to death by the State and thus permanently exiled from the world.

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[1] Shaw, 1946, VI: 158.
[2] *Ibid.*, VI: 167.

Throughout his play, Shaw is at pains to present the exclusion and persecution of Joan as regrettable but necessary official responses to the social threat that she represents; Joan must pay the price for her own exceptionality. Nevertheless, she remains exceptional. In her doomed and relentless grace she is Christlike, betrayed not merely by those whose actions directly bring about her downfall but rather by all humanity as it fails on all counts, destroying the very thing that is simultaneously the measure of mankind's ignobility and the embodiment of its potential for perfection. Parallels with Christ abound in Joan's story and Shaw is careful to fully draw them out. Joan's abandonment by her followers, the ransom for which she is "bought" by her enemies, the trial in which Church and State prosecute her as an enemy of the people and of good order, and the powerful concluding gesture of her martyrdom are events presented by her history which bear an obvious structural and symbolic similarity to Christ's life as it is related in the Gospel narratives. In Shaw's play, it is the chaplain who is the first to comprehend and declare the symbolic enormity and spiritual significance of Joan's martyrdom: "Some of the people laughed at her. They would have laughed at Christ.....I will go pray among her ashes. I am no better than Judas: I will hang myself."[1] Joan's associates, like Christ's disciples, are tested by destiny and found wanting.

The theme of Joan's abandonment and betrayal by her erstwhile associates is repeated in almost every reiteration of her story. In Anouilh's *The Lark*, Cauchon warns Joan against pinning her hopes upon earthly salvation; her friends have forsaken her and will not come to her rescue.[2] Maxwell Anderson's Massieu is emphatic, stressing Joan's isolation in an attempt to break her will: "You are alone here. Your king has forgotten you. The noble soldiers with whom you rode to war have all forgotten you.....You are alone and lost and condemned."[3] Only the Church now extends the hand of friendship to her; she has only to give in to its authority and her excruciating loneliness will be over. In every version of her drama, however, Joan falters but ultimately resists the anodyne of assimilation; her

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[1] Shaw, 1946, VI: 171.
[2] Anouilh, 1990, II: 75.
[3] Anderson, 1950, II: 116.

estrangement is too deep, extending beyond exterior circumstance and causality to the innermost recesses of her being.

In Bresson's *The Trial of Joan of Arc*, Joan's solitariness is a condition of her spiritual identity, a symptom and essential characteristic of holiness itself. She exists in a bleak universe in which the emotional distance between the various individuals caught up in her drama cannot be bridged. Her responses to her examiners' questions are communications from the world of the supernatural; she already exists beyond ordinary life, in an quasi-autistic state of interior alienation which permits no possibility of connection with others. "The Bresson protagonist," observes Paul Schrader, "lives in an all-inclusive cold, factual environment, yet rather than adapting to that environment, he responds to something totally separate from it."[1] Joan is never shown in the same frame as her interrogator; the camera cuts back and forth between them, following the rhythm of question and answer, but when Joan speaks the individual to whom she addresses her words is always situated outside the frame so that her testimony seems impersonally imparted not to an individual but to the concrete world-at-large which contains but does not possess her. The spatial and temporal displacements produced by the repeated use of fragmented images, by the absence of establishing shots, by the stillness of the camera as it refuses intimacy and interaction between the characters, by the frequent use of editing to reduce the action to a series of gestures which imply but do not show an event, creates a climate of detachment, a relentless vision of alienated presences moving within a fractured, insular world with which they cannot engage and in which all their efforts to communicate with one another are doomed to failure. Joan, Schrader points out, "is not responding to her environment on a 1:1 ratio. She answers her judges as if she were instead speaking to her mysterious, transcendental 'voices'."[2] At the stake, Joan waits calmly for death with her eyes closed and without a trace of emotion on her face. She undergoes her martyrdom as if it were no more than a ritual departure from a world

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[1] Paul Schrader, *Transcendental Style in Film* (Berkeley, Los Angeles, London: University of California Press, 1972), p.76.
[2] *Ibid.*, p.77.

in which she has always been both a stranger and a visitor. As wreaths of smoke slowly coil upwards and around her, her last words are uttered quietly and without panic or sorrow; she makes a quiet statement of faith that she does not require to be heard by her assembled persecutors: "My voices were from God. What I did, I did by the command of God. My voices did not deceive me. My revelations were from God." Her death at the stake is the final realization of her solitariness, an unequivocal statement of her supernatural and unreachable essence.

In every version of her story, Joan's isolation is not merely a dramatic device to gain the sympathy of the audience and neither is it a simple statement of her rejection by society. Its dimensions are far-reaching and profound. Finally she is abandoned not only by humanity but also by her voices, which in the end answer her despair with silence. "It is true that I am alone, that my friends have forgotten me, both the king and the nobles who fought beside me," Maxwell Anderson's Joan says in prayer to her unresponsive God, after she has signed the confession. "There is no word from them, no offer of ransom. And I am doubly alone, for I have denied my visions, and they will come to me no more."[1] After her capitulation, Joan is no longer "alone with God" but is now alone in every sense; she must arrive at her own spiritual understanding and follow her ethical stance through to its conclusion with neither human nor divine guidance to help her. She goes to her death without certain knowledge of whether she does right or wrong, with nothing and no-one but her own faith to sustain her. In the final moments of her life, her plight again recalls that of Christ who, in his ninth hour upon the cross, cried with a loud voice "My God, my God, why hast thou forsaken me?"[2]

In Shaw's Epilogue, the parallels with Christ are still more explicit as a resurrected Joan returns, in spirit, to earth and once again encounters the major actors in her drama. Ladvenu refers to her as God's "daughter on earth"[3] and goes on to inform Charles, in words that have a strong biblical tenor, that,

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[1] Anderson, 1950, II: 118.
[2] The Gospel According to St. Matthew, 27:46.
[3] Shaw, 1946, Epilogue: 174.

> "the white robe of innocence is cleansed from the smirch of the burning faggots; the holy life is sanctified; the true heart that lived through the flame is consecrated; a great lie is silenced for ever; and a great wrong is set right before all men."[1]

Despite the repentence expressed by her associates, however, Joan is nevertheless again rejected by humanity, which judges her too perfect and too saintly for an imperfect world. Joan's associates acknowledge both their own failings and Joan's virtues and, unable to live up to her example -- like Christ's disciples -- they pronounce themselves and all humanity unworthy of her and slink away one by one. Shaw does not condemn them for running away but rather acknowledges through and with them that the very qualities which make Joan holy also make her dangerous. "He wants to make it clear to us," comments Wisenthal, "that good intentions, high-mindedness, and personal righteousness are not a sufficient basis for human conduct."[2] The Epilogue affirms Joan's eternal isolation as an unfortunate but necessary conclusion to her career. Nine years later, in the Preface to his play *On the Rocks* (1933), Shaw would write of a "communist" Christ in much the same vein:

> "He was against the priests, against the judiciary, the military, against the city.....against all the interests, classes, principalities and powers, inviting everybody to abandon all these and follow him. By every argument, legal, political, religious, customary, and polite, he was the most complete enemy of the society of his time ever brought to the bar. He was guilty on every count of the indictment, and on many more that his accusors had not the wit to frame. If he was innocent then the whole world was guilty.To acquit him was to overthrow civilisation and all its institutions"[3]

Great characters such as Joan of Arc and Christ, Shaw's work suggests, merit their condemnation by and exclusion from ordinary society but are nevertheless worthy of

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[1] Shaw, 1946, Epilogue: 174-175.
[2] Wisenthal, 1974, p.177.
[3] Shaw, "On the Rocks" in *Too True to be Good, Village Wooing, On the Rocks* (London: Constable and Company Ltd., 1949), Preface: 153-154.

veneration. In life, their example disrupts all social order and their actions unwittingly bring bloodshed and chaos in their wake; their very virtuousness is oppressive to the great majority of humankind, which gazes with admiration and fear upon the perfection in its midst but which can receive such absolute goodness only as a form of tyranny. Only in death can the likes of Joan of Arc and Christ truly serve the general good of humanity. As abstract objects of veneration, they function at a safe remove from society; they can be worshipped as ideal figures whose influence is evolutionary rather than revolutionary. Their posthumous exaltation cancels out the urgent impact of their inspiration and permits mankind the time to find its own way, gradually, towards the ideal that they represent. Shaw's stance is coolly pragmatic; perfection is all very well, but mankind is not yet perfect and must be met on its own terms if it is to advance. Nevertheless, he gives Joan the last word in his play as a concession to the anguish of eternal exile that she must endure as a result of her greatness and exalted status: "O God that madest this beautiful earth, when will it be ready to receive Thy saints? How long, O Lord, how long?"[1]

In Carl Dreyer's *The Passion of Joan of Arc*, Joan's solitariness is emphatically expressed and everywhere indicated during her trial. From the outset, the film announces her exclusion. Seated upon a low stool positioned in the middle of the courtroom, Joan's is an isolated presence surrounded by the massed force of her persecutors. The fact of Joan's youth and femaleness marks her out as one entirely apart from the narrow community of vicious old men who are plotting her downfall and, as we have already seen, Dreyer employs a number of techniques to emphasise the division, filming Joan from above and her judges from below, using strong, direct lighting to render her radiant while her judges' features are scored and pitted with shadow, and continually employing close-ups to focus attention upon the contrasts of texture, tone, and facial expression. The priests' ecclesiastical uniform of robes is set against Joan's plain oufit of tunic, breeches, and clumsy boots, configuring in costume the

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[1] Shaw, 1946, Epilogue: 189.

dialectical opposition of multiple oppressors and their singular object through the simple, effective symbolism of the clothing that serves to connote belonging and unbelonging, insider and outsider, the officialdom of the State and the fragile individuality of the object of its oppressive attention. Joan only rarely shares the frame with other characters who are, in marked contrast, repeatedly filmed in attitudes of collusion. The unholy trinity of Warwick, Cauchon, and Loyseleur continually communicate with one another by means of conspiratorial glances, signals, whispered exchanges. Throughout the film, only Joan is called by her name; her persecutors are massed within their shared anonynimity. Again and again, the film cuts back and forth between shots of the solitary Joan and shots of her judges exchanging meaningful looks, conferring, uniting in sinister conspiracy against her. Even when Joan lies on her sick-bed, close to death, her isolation cannot be breached; she reaches out for Cauchon's hand, like a child in need of reassurance, and he disgustedly pulls away from her.

Among the priests, only de Houppeville dares to defy his sinister brethren and assert solidarity with Joan. After he has voiced his opposition to her trial and pronounced Joan a saint, the camera pans across from Warwick to d'Estivet, to Loyseleur, and to Cauchon, registering their responses. There is a cut back to de Houppeville, who has risen to his feet, and then to another priest who speaks and points an accusing finger. In the next shot, we see the sly Loyseleur nod almost imperceptibly. De Houppeville's exit from the courtroom, with the soldiers following in his wake, is intercut with shots of a kind-faced old priest whose shocked expression conveys his dismayed comprehension of the fate that awaits whosoever dares to break rank. After the ominous departure of de Houppeville, Joan is more alone than ever. The enactment of the judges' material power, which has only been implied up to this point, has demonstrated the exclusion of all ethical considerations from the proceedings and precluded further rebellions from among the rank and file; we know now that no other champion will come forward to stand between Joan and her fate. She stands utterly alone, with nothing but her own faith and resources to protect her.

Dreyer's film permits Joan a less heroic ally of sorts in the form of another young priest who, like Joan, is rendered incandescent with light. Massieu (Antonin Artaud) is sympathetic to Joan's plight but incredulous of her mission. Only once does he take an active stance on her behalf, breaking rank to warn her to be careful how she answers her interrogators. But Massieu lacks de Houppeville's reckless courage; the cold, disapproving gaze of the other judges causes him to fall silent and cower back against a wall. Filmed from a high angle and isolated in the frame against a stark white background, Massieu's flinching submission to his masters is a powerful reminder both of de Houppeville's fate and of the threat which faces the solitary but unsubmissive Joan. Massieu does not step out of line again but he remains sympathetic to Joan and offers her what comfort he can without compromising his own safety. After her condemnation, it is he who hears her confession while another glowing young priest, Ladvenu, gives her holy communion and final absolution. As Joan burns at the stake, Massieu stands steadfastly before her in the midst of the unfolding chaos, holding up a cross above the smoke for her to see as she dies. This, his final action, is a gesture across the immense gulf that exists between them; the insider pays tribute to the doomed outsider, one who will live offers the solace of compassion and a shared faith to one who must die. In this symbolic reaching-out, Joan's solitariness becomes almost unbearably poignant; the concrete usefulness of Massieu's compassion has been negated before his final gesture was ever made. He offers not hope but comfort.

Joan's estrangement in Dreyer's film is, however, limited to the environment of the trial and her alienation from her judges and guards. In the sequence which leads up to her martyrdom, her isolation is at last symbolically broken by the film's imagistic association of her with the peasant women in the crowd. As she emerges from the castle gates, shaven-headed, clad in a rough white penitence gown, walking slowly between twin ranks of helmeted soldiers whose long spears angle inwards to form a frame about her, an old woman steps forward from the crowd to offer her water from a bowl. Joan stops and drinks a little, then continues on her way towards the stake. Shortly after, as Joan stands clutching a cross

to her chest, the film cuts twice to shots, taken from Joan's point of view, of a baby suckling at its mother's breast. Later, as the flames take hold of the pyre, the camera cuts back and forth several times between shots of the burning faggots and of Joan at the stake to pan across the tearful, distraught faces of a crowd of onlookers largely composed of peasant women who watch and empathetically endure something of her suffering. Although Joan's fate is one which she must endure alone, the images that Dreyer cuts between immediately before and during her martyrdom serve to give it a significance which sets Joan's destiny within the wider context of humanity as it is represented by the common people and, particularly, by the women in the crowd. "In deciding to die for her vision," David Bordwell observes, "Jeanne has chosen a private destiny, but.....it has the most explosive public repercussions."[1] As Joan's head slumps forward and life departs from her body, violence erupts as the soldiers attack the crowd. In emphasising the connection between Joan's persecution and the State's brutal oppression of the common people, the sequence breaks open the final moments of Joan's concrete and solitary fate; the image of Joan at the stake, like that of Christ upon the cross, is transformed into a symbol of unity, of a shared humanity and suffering. Joan no longer represents only herself but instead stands for the life-force, for all that is good and true in mankind and which is oppressed and destroyed by human evil.

For Brecht, Joan's isolation is a weakness that must be overcome. She *must* make common cause with the rest of humanity in order for her destiny to have any meaning or value outside itself. In *Saint Joan of the Stockyards*, Brecht draws attention to the parallels between Joan of Arc and Christ in order to bring into question the role of religion in a capitalist economy. For this purpose, he gives certain of his scenes explanatory subheadings such as "The expulsion of the money-changers from the temple," "Pierpont Mauler's speech on the indispensability of capitalism and religion," "Joan's third descent into the depths: the snowfall," and, finally, "Death and canonization of St. Joan of the Stockyards." Brecht's

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[1] Bordwell, 1973, p.56.

attack is less upon religion itself than upon the practices of its expounders, whose attitudes of spiritual superiority and notions of moral worthiness and unworthiness serve to divide rather than to unite humanity. Joan Dark's own brand of condescending evangelism is testament to her position as an outsider; hers is an educated and middleclass presence among the starving meat factory workers. She fails to recognize the privileged position from which she speaks as she patronisingly informs them that "These low pleasures for which you work so hard, a bite to eat, nice homes, the movies, they are just coarse sensual enjoyments."[1] Having chosen to relinquish such comforts herself, she is blind to the appeal that they have for those who have never had them in the first place. She identifies herself with neither the workers nor their cause but, at the same time, she also starts to detach herself from the Black Straw Hats faction to which she belongs. Warned by her fellow evangelists that the workers are "lazybones! Gluttonous, shirkers, from birth onward. Void of all higher impulse!" she responds: "No, I want to know."[2] The qualities of independence, curiosity, and sincerity that she possesses gradually bring her to an understanding of the workers' true plight and of the part that she herself has played in prolonging it. Her isolation ends at last when she comes to realize the political and economic interests at stake and makes common cause with the workers. Her destiny entirely bound up with the fortunes of the oppressed workers, her death is no mere indulgence of holier-than-thou saintliness but a genuine self-sacrifice made for the common good. The chorus with which the play ends is a plea for a society of mutuality and equality:

"Humanity! Two souls abide
within thy breast!
Do not set either one aside:
To live with both is best!
Be torn apart with constant care!
Be two in one! Be here, be there!
Hold the low one, hold the high one
Hold the straight one, hold the sly one
Hold the pair!"[3]

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[1] Brecht, 1962, II.d: 98.
[2] *Ibid.*, II.d: 101.
[3] *Ibid.*, XII: 199.

Far from remarking and finalising her estrangement, Joan Dark's martyrdom signals the subsumation of her individality into the wider body of mankind in general. Through her death she embraces, and is embraced by, all of humanity. Brecht's political message is simple and effective; apartness is a dangerous delusion since it is in society and not in the lone individual that the true meaning and value of humanity is sited.

In his later play, *The Trial of Joan of Arc at Rouen, 1431*, Brecht entirely and emphatically reverses Shaw's association of Joan's isolation with her strength. The emphasis that Shaw places upon the holy motivation of Joan's mission is transplanted by Brecht onto Joan's overwhelming desire to free her people from their English oppressors. Here, the dynamics of Joan's drama are exterior and political, rather than interior and spiritual. When La Fontaine enquires what she has asked of her voices, she replies, "Victory for my side."[1] She is consistently pragmatic; almost every remark she makes concerning her beliefs, her divine inspiration, and her mystical experiences, links them to the practical, martial, and liberational aspects of her mission. Her relationship with God is a strangely symbiotic arrangement ; if He has had a spiritual use for her, then she has had a secular use for Him.

Joan is absent from the first two scenes of the play, indirectly introduced through the conversation of the ordinary citizens of Rouen, who have followed her career with wonder and who now discuss her capture and trial with trepidation. They speculate as to whether she is a witch, a saint, a fool, or a lunatic, and are as yet unable to accept her at face value. Joan's importance as an individual is downplayed. She is not yet her countrymen's heroine and represents only one part of their common experience and circumstance. The trivial concerns of everyday life are recounted in the same breath as are details of the great drama unfolding in the castle; in Scene 5, the conversation between the fishwife and Dr. Dufour moves easily back and forth between the subject of Joan and that of the day's supply of fresh mackerel.[2] Throughout the play, the action cuts back and forth between scenes from Joan's

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[1] Brecht, 1973, III: 159.
[2] *Ibid.*, V: 167.

trial in Rouen castle and scenes set among the ordinary people who live and work in the town outside its walls. Joan's individual destiny is constantly referred back to, and contextualised by, its effect upon her fellow countrymen as they go about their daily business. Her story is stripped of its wider historical and mythical significance and related from the perspective of the everyday; the focus is always upon how events and circumstance touch the lives of those who live through them, rather than upon how they make national history.

However, Joan's trial unavoidably sets her apart from the people who make market-place conversation of her fate. She faces her interrogators alone, and bolsters her courage with hopes of a rescue. In Scene 9, her resolve at last shows signs of giving way. Maître Erard specifies her prolonged isolation as the cause of her increasing despair, and then goes on to demonstrate to Joan the futility of her continued resistance:

> "Your king is a heretic; moreover, he has forgotten you. Your apparitions are illusions.....You may as well take off your male attire, nobody has come with a horse to set you free. Your voices have deceived you, and what's more, they have stopped coming."[1]

In order further to convince her, Maître Erard quotes a splendidly Brechtian sophism from the Bible: "The branch cannot bear fruit of itself, except it abide in the vine."[2] Confronted by an overwhelming solitude, by betrayal and abandonment by all of those in whom she has put her trust, promised her freedom if only she will submit, Joan gives in and signs the confession. However, she is not set free.

The people of Rouen receive the news of Joan's submission with dismay and they respond by rioting. When Joan hears of the turmoil enacted on her behalf, she resumes male dress and withdraws her confession. She explains her decision to the Bishop:

> "I only recanted because I was afraid of the fire. In battle I was never afraid of fire, because I wasn't alone, I had my men around me. But then I doubted the people; I thought

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[1] Brecht, 1973, IX: 176.
[2] *Ibid.*

> they wouldn't care if I died, and would just go on drinking their wine. But they knew all about me the whole time, and nothing I did was in vain."[1]

Loneliness is Joan's great weakness, while a feeling of solidarity is the source of her courage and moral strength. In the last instance, it is not God but the people of France whose interests she serves and whose support makes her life, and her death, meaningful. After she has been burned, the peasant Jacques Legrain clearly restates this point as he recounts her story:

> "First she led the people against then enemy, that's how she was captured. Then, when they locked her up in the tower in Rouen, she didn't hear from us and became weak like you or me. She even recanted. But when she recanted the common people of Rouen got so angry at her that they went to the docks and beat up the English. She heard about it, nobody knows how, and her courage came back. She realized that a law court is as good a battlefield as the earthworks before Orléans. So she turned her greatest defeat into our greatest victory. After her lips were silent, her voice was heard."[2]

With this interpretation, Joan re-enters history but does so not as a solitary individual but as a heroine who embodies the hopes and courage of her people. Alone, she is "weak like you or me," but reinstated as the representative of the society to which she belongs she becomes powerful once more. The defeat of the lone individual configures the victory of the group; the silence of Joan's dead lips becomes the voice of the masses who survive her.

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[1] Brecht, 1973, XIII: 182.
[2] *Ibid.*, XVI: 186.

CHAPTER FIVE

THE TRIAL

The imaginative reconstruction of the past begins with the historical account, but so too is this account created by the historian's investigative imagination as it engages creatively with the documentary traces of the absent past. Hayden White points out that, in the absence of a scientific language or methodology, the historical work is the result of a literary process of emplotment and narrativisation which governs the "selection and arrangement of data from the *unprocessed historical record* in the interest of rendering that record more comprehensible to an *audience* of a particular kind."[1] Since the historian must use the discourse of ordinary language in order to re-present the past, he unavoidably selects and approaches his subject with a set of tropological strategies[2] and ideological frameworks already in mind. As he works up his raw material into a narrative, he employs explanatory tactics involving "a *particular* combination of modes of emplotment, argument, and ideological implication."[3] Far from simply uncovering the past, then, the historian can only recreate it through a process which necessarily mixes together historical data and imaginative interpretation as it translates them into narrative form. The process of "objective" truth-seeking in the discourse of history is, unavoidably, attended by much the same failings for which Nietzsche condemns philosophers:

> "They pose as having discovered and attained their real opinions through the self-evolution of a cold, pure, divinely unperturbed dialectic.....while what happens at bottom is that a prejudice, a notion, an 'inspiration,' generally a desire of

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[1] Hayden White, *Metahistory* (Baltimore and London: John Hopkins University Press, 1974), p.5.
[2] White suggests that these can be characterised along the lines of the "four basic tropes for the analysis of poetic, or figurative language: Metaphor, Metonymy, Synecdoche, and Irony." (*ibid.*, p.31).
[3] *Ibid.*, p.29.

> the heart sifted and made abstract, is defended by them with reasons sought after the event....."[1]

Nietzsche's criticism is extreme, but the point he is making nevertheless holds good. The historian, like Nietzsche's loathed philosophers, brings to his work a ready-made set of linguistic, ideological, and historiographical notions which prefigure the material that he purports to discover; the historian reinvents his historical material from the first moment he begins to seek it.

The historical work sets out to reveal the "truth" of the past but must in fact present, in equal measure, the "truth" of the modes and ideologically-informed moment of its interpretation; it cannot do otherwise. Historical speech is, above all, *committed* speech; it seeks to freeze the "rediscovered" past within the ideologies of the present. It is a discursive process engaged in the epistemological and ideological assimilation of an absent objective reality (the reality of the past is, of course, *always* absent; history is, of necessity, an heuristic discipline), a process which takes place within a cultural and historiographical context in which every ideological shift is registered as a fresh absolute, endlessly recasting all that has gone before it. We cannot speak of history as if it were a single, consistent, coherent, and objective scientific examination of material events. Unqualified use of the term "history" creates a false impression of epistemological consistency which disguises the multiple narrative possibilities and interpretations of the documentary record of the past; it implies an impossible discursive proximity to irrecoverable "truths."

The notion of history as monilithic configures the undifferentiated historical discourse as a monument to the universal; it entails a denial of the pluralism of the historical subject. In its constant pursuit of grand causal "truths," the ordinary (traditional) historical discourse is obliged to circumnavigate the chaos of the local and the myriad inflections suggested by multiple possible perspectives. It must deny its own constructed nature in the interests of upholding the particular "truths" that it seeks to tell. History offers itself as a transparent

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[1] Nietzsche, 1990, p.36.

discourse through which the truth of the past is revealed in the present, but "transparent" is precisely what history is *not*. However, this is not to say that history is in any sense a *false* discourse; its failure successfully to represent the truths that it professes to uncover does not only arise out of its methodological debt to the contingencies of ideology, historiography, and the questing imagination, but also arises out of a flaw which is intrinsic to its truth-telling objective. Assuming that it remains faithful to its source material, history cannot "falsify" the past for precisely the same reason that it cannot tell the certain truth of it. Falsification requires a disparity between an original object and its epistemological or discursive construction, and such a falsification is impossible since, for history, *there can be no original object save that which is constructed by the processes of the historical discourse and which is therefore not an original at all but is rather a simulacrum arising out of the heuristic interpretation of the material traces left by the always-absent original object.* To put this more concretely: history (like historical fiction) can draw upon the documentary record textually to create *a* Joan of Arc, one which apparently corresponds to the available historical data but which is neither a "true" object (since the original is always absent and its ontological DNA is irrecoverable) nor a "false" object (since no original Joan of Arc exists to be falsified).

Recognition of the processes of narrativisation and of ideological and imaginative interpretation that are inherent in the historical discourse should not, however, lead us to regard history as a species of fiction. Narrativisation is a way of ordering the historical record, not of inventing it; the imagination is engaged not to create but to realize the events of the past, while ideology functions insidiously to make them meaningful within the context of the present. Even where its subject matter is purely historical, fiction differs from works of history in that fictional interpretations are significantly less restricted by the facts provided by the historical record; the fictional narrative, obviously enough, is constructed far more freely than is an historical narrative. History seeks to capture the *reality* of the past while fiction seeks, above all else, to tell a good story. Nevertheless, the selection of and engagement with historical subjects for fictive reiteration follows much the same pattern as that which White

discerns in historical accounts. The historical field is similarly prefigured by tropes and by ideology and it is similarly recast through modes of emplotment and explanatory argument (or configuration) as it is forged into its final narrative form. Whereas the historical account is bound to the documentary record, however, modern fictional works can take advantage of a wide array of "source" material; Joan of Arc's story, for example, is reconstructed in semi-fictional form from a combination of the trial records, subsequent historical studies, hagiography, folklore and legend, and an extensive canon of artistic works of all varieties. Neither are works of historical fiction committed to the exertion of historicity; the scope of their invention is greater and more flexible than that allowed by history, though the paradigms of a given history must be broadly observed nevertheless. The historical record and the tradition of its reiteration put constraints on the dramatic imagination, compelling it to work out its fictions within the framework provided by the documentary record. Joan of Arc's story has long been written on the cultural imagination; its chronology, its major events, gestures, and characters, its religious tenor, and its conclusion, are already prescribed by the tradition of its reiteration; here, the process of narrativisation, in fiction as in history, is essentially one of inventive *translation* rather than one of invention alone.

The documented life of an individual has a crude, ready-made narrative of sorts in so far as it has a discernible beginning, middle, and end. This basic structure can be further elaborated in order to impose a degree of coherence upon what might otherwise be a disparate sequence of events. The task of the dramatist or filmmaker is to make this basic structure meaningful, to build upon and develop its ideological and aesthetic possibilities, usually within an archetypal plot form (tragedy, comedy, romance, satire, *etc.*). In the case of Joan of Arc, much of the "plot" is already discernible in the documentary records of her trial -- a fact which is, naturally enough, one of the main reasons why her life-story is so frequently selected as a subject for fictional works in the first place. There is a sense in which Joan's story writes itself. The well-documented events leading up to her death and the nature of that death implicate the formulae of tragedy which are, in turn, retrospectively read into her life so

that, in this sense, Joan's story is always played backwards regardless of how its chronology is arranged in the narrative. The selection of Joan as a subject for imaginative and historical investigation and explanation is largely the result of the singularly fierce and aesthetically and ideologically suggestive manner of her extinction. In the cultural imagination, Joan forever lives her life in the shadow of the stake which marks its earthly conclusion.

Almost all that we know of Joan of Arc originates in the transcripts of the two trials that her career inspired. The first of these is a detailed record of her prosecution and condemnation at Rouen castle in 1431; it reveals Joan in her own words and in the words of the Church dignitaries whose task it was to assess and to judge her. Motivated by the political need to destroy her credibility as the focal point of French resistance to English rule, the first trial sought to extract a confession of heresy from her and, when it ultimately failed to achieve this, instead pronounced her excommunication and handed her over to the secular arm to be burned at the stake. The transcripts of the second trial, conducted twenty-five years after Joan's death, record the sworn statements of her former companions, associates, and followers, who were called upon to testify as to her character, motives, and actions, in order to clear her name and rescind the verdict of the earlier trial. The second trial sought her posthumous rehabilitation; it was prompted not by any altruistic desire to right what was, by then, popularly considered to be a great wrong but rather was called for reasons of political expediency. In the two decades that had passed since Joan's death at the stake, the political climate in France had substantially altered. Whereas in 1431 Charles VII had maintained an embarrassed silence on the matter of Joan, by 1456 it suited the needs of the House of Valois to reassert her status as a popular symbol of national unity and patriotism and thereby profit from its earlier association with her.

Each of Joan's trials was conducted towards a particular, predetermined end, its form and testimony harnessed to its political purpose. Each trial functionally opposes the other, the first seeking to condemn and vilify Joan and the second to exonerate and exalt her. Such an opposition invites the sort of partisanship that Shaw reveals in his Preface in his flat

statement that "For us, the first trial stands valid; and the rehabilitation would be negligible but for the mass of sincere testimony it produced as to Joan's engaging character."[1] Joan is present in the trial transcripts not as a subject in her own right but as the object of specific processes which describe her through testimony selected, contrived, and delivered within the context of the respective agendas of each of the two trials. While the historical records furnish us with a great deal of information about her career and indicate something of her nature they are not, and were never meant to be, objective biographical accounts of her as an individual. "The primary sources contain a mix of verifiable facts as well as anecdotes of miraculous occurrences that seemed perfectly natural and factual to the medieval mind,"[2] remarks the historian Gerda Lerner. The evidence that the records provide must be viewed in the light of its origins, context, nature, and purpose. In the transcripts of the first trial we find Joan's responses, given under circumstances of extreme duress, to a narrowly focused and antagonistic series of interrogations. The condemnation trial presented no testimony in Joan's defence, but neither did the second, posthumous trial summon to the stand any witnesses who might have proved hostile to its purpose of posthumously exonerating Joan. The transcripts of the rehabilitation trial record the statements of individuals who were themselves recalling events which had occurred more than two decades earlier. By the time the second trial was called, the story of Joan of Arc was already the stuff of legend; the picture of her that emerges from this testimony is one unavoidably distorted by the lapse of time and the resultant idiosyncrasies of memory, by the personal bias and character of Joan's witnesses, by inextricable confusions of fact, fantasy, and individual partiality, and by the purpose and nature of the rehabilitation trial itself.

Published in complete form, in Latin, by Quicherat in the 1840's and subsequently in English translation by T. Douglas Murray[3] in 1902 and W.P. Barrett in 1931, the transcripts of the trial of condemnation have been employed, fully or in part, as the historical basis of

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[1] Shaw, 1946, Preface: 41.
[2] Gerda Lerner, "Joan of Arc: Three Films" in Mark C. Carnes (ed.), *Past Imperfect* (London: Cassell, 1996), p.56.
[3] T. Douglas Murray, *Jeanne d'Arc* (New York: McClure, Phillips, 1902)

almost every modern imaginative representation of Joan of Arc. Carl Dreyer and Robert Bresson both made films which are exclusively concerned with Joan's prosecution, and each director's script takes almost all of its dialogue *verbatim* from the historical records. In Jacques Rivette's *Jeanne la Pucelle* each major episode of Joan's life is introduced by intertitles followed by the re-enactment of testimony given by a series of witnesses from the rehabilitation trial. Victor Fleming's *Joan of Arc* opens with a montage of tolling bells, ranks of burning candles, the Byzantine splendour of a cathedral interior, all of which are bathed in a glorious, golden light, and then cuts directly to the sombre solemnity of the trial scene; Joan's story, from her origins in Domremy onwards, is then told in flashback. The final twenty-five minutes of the film -- almost a third of its running-time -- are devoted to Joan's trial and martyrdom. As with most fictional versions of the trial, a considerable of number of the answers she gives to her inquisitors are almost word-for-word reiterations of her responses as they are recorded in the trial transcripts. In Fleming's film, however, the pernicious influence of Joan's English enemies and their ecclesiastical allies is greatly exaggerated in order to exonerate the Church as a whole. Joan's transgressive identity is dissolved into her identification as a resistance leader, a champion of national liberation comered by her country's enemies; her prosecution is politically, rather than religiously, motivated.

Of Shaw's *Saint Joan*, Louis L. Martz correctly observes that "some of Joan's most Shavian remarks are in fact her own words set down in the long records of her trial."[1] Thus where Joan is questioned about her visions of Saint Michael the documentary record states: "Asked if he was naked, she answered: 'Do you think God has not wherewithal to clothe him?'"[2] And in Shaw's play we find the following exchange:

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[1] Louis L. Martz, "The Saint as Tragic Hero: Saint Joan and Murder in the Cathedral" in Cleanth Brooks (ed.), *Tragic Themes in Western Literature* (New Haven & London: Yale University Press , 1966) p.163

[2] Barrett, 1931, p.81. Shaw in fact used Murray's 1902 translation of the trial records, which differs very slightly from Barrett's.

> COURCELLES. How do you know that the spirit which appears to you is an archangel? Does he not appear to you as a naked man?
> JOAN. Do you think that God cannot afford clothes for him?[1]

Likewise, in Anouilh's *The Lark* and Maxwell Anderson's *Joan of Lorraine* much of Joan's trial testimony is lifted straight from the historical records; the phrasing is sometimes altered, but the sentiments are invariably exactly those expressed by the "real" Joan. In Brecht's *The Trial of Saint Joan at Rouen, 1431*, the trial scenes consist of edited and paraphrased versions of entire passages lifted from the original transcripts. Again and again, the historical Joan speaks through the mouth of her fictionally recreated form but each time her words are reconfigured by the imagined circumstances of their utterance, by the dialogues of which they are a part, their import continually altered by an infinite variety of gesture, facial expression, and vocal nuance. The accumulation of so many interpretations of the same historical material has resulted in a canon of works about Joan which is characterised both by the repetition of key events and by the diversity of inference and meaning it presents; Joan's story essentially remains the same, and yet the Joan *figure* is fundamentally elusive and inconstant, at once within and outside the fictionalised history which describes it.

The nature of the historical records is such that, while they provide much useful evidence about Joan's career, they reveal comparatively little that is certain about Joan herself. Of her character, they reveal hardly anything that is not already manifestly obvious from the details of her career; the trial transcripts confirm that she possessed a keen intelligence, that her beliefs were sincerely and strongly held, that she was resourceful and courageous, that she was resolute in her refusal to be intimidated. Beyond these bare facts, we learn precious little else about her nature. There always remain the questions that she was never asked, the questions that she refused to answer, the ambiguities intrinsic to her person and her actions, the absence of any adequate description of either her motivation or her spiritual experience, the undescribed and perhaps indescribable interior struggle which led her first to confess and

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[1] Shaw, 1946, VI: 159.

then to withdraw her confession and which is related in the historical documents only through the unembellished outlining of these events. We may infer what we will from the historical evidence, but we cannot *know* the "truth" of Joan of Arc. The history of her actions delineates gaps in our understanding which can be filled *only* by the imagination; it provides the thematic and contextual structure of her drama, but at the same time indicates its central and unassailable mystery. In imaginative retellings of Joan's story, the action must progress through some or all of the verifiable events of her history towards the foreclosed conclusion of her death. It must broadly conform to the recognizable format determined by the historical record and by the centuries-long tradition of its cultural reiteration. With such familiar raw material, dramatic tension can only be achieved by shifting the emphasis of the narrative away from the temporal succession of events and causality inscribed in historical circumstance; instead, the predictable trajectory of the action is constructed as a formal, exterior specification through which metahistorical meanings are established and explored in the imaginative text. "The historical past becomes a kind of closed book," writes Herbert Lindenberger, "one which is reenacted as a religious ritual reenacts some hallowed myth.....Our interest tends to shift from the *what* to the *how*....."[1] The constituent historical elements of Joan of Arc's story are subordinated to the mythic-tragic discourse through which they are related and to the ideological and epistemological interpretations which create and construct their 'meaning' within any given text.

The effect of ritualization which arises out of the constant, formalised reiteration of Joan's history is doubly present in dramatizations of her trial since the trial itself, with its ceremonial, its legal language, its rigorous structuring of behaviours, responses, actions, the disciplinary nature of the logic which it brings to bear upon the situation of its own enactment and upon the aberrant individual, constitutes a ritual of socio-cultural ordering. The trial -- like a drama -- functions as a process of examination and disclosure, of schematic "meaning-making," which progresses inexorably towards the resolution of the verdict. Reconstructed in film and

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[1] Herbert Lindenberger, *Historical Drama* (Chicago & London: University of Chicago Press, 1975), p.24.

in theatre, the enclosed space of the courtroom at Rouen serves as an arena in which the mechanisms of the legal process serve as a formalised enactment of the tragic conflict; Joan stands before her enemies in a ritualized confrontation which already has her tragic fall as a concluding inevitability inscribed within the architecture of its process and narrative. In the infrastructure of the trial, the protagonists are situated in adversarial relation to one another and engaged in an antagonistic duel of words in which the ethical dialectics which shape Joan's story are made fully explicit. In the opening scene of Dreyer's *The Passion of Joan of Arc*, a soldier brings a stool for Joan and places it in the middle of the courtroom; David Bordwell observes that, through this device, the director "not only defines the locale of Jeanne's trial but also diagrams her essential situation: as the stool is midway between the priests and the soldiers, so she is caught between ecclesiastical and military authority, and both will try to trap her."[1] The trial situates Joan ethically as well as physically. All extraneous information and action is excluded from the procedure of the narrative; the confrontation is concentrated upon the polarised absolutes of the ethical conflict which is communicated and examined through the medium of legal process, through the formal, forensic arrangement of questions, answers, statements, charges, the legal verdict. The conventions inherent to the trial are reconfigured as those of tragedy at the same time as the tragic conflict is recast in the formalised relations of the trial; the imperatives of tragedy are translated into the imperatives of legal requirement, and *vice-versa*. In essence if not intent, the dialectics of the trial are identical to those of tragic drama; the State confronts the individual, man confronts woman, age confronts youth, in the radical oppositions which are inherent to the rituals of law and the dialectical conventions of tragedy alike.

In their roles as judges, Joan's adversaries are functionally dehumanised; they serve as agents of a disciplinary process in which sentiment, personal ethics, and pity, have no place. Individual conscience is subordinated to the juridical mechanics of the trial and of the legal system as an impersonal institution dedicated to the regulation of human behaviour and

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[1] Bordwell, 1973, p.29.

identity. In Anouilh's *The Lark*, the Inquisitor begs to be released from the agonising conflict between his private self and his public role, between his compassion and his duty, his humanity and his devotion to God:

> "O Lord! It has pleased You to grant that Man should humble himself at the eleventh hour in the person of this young girl. It has been Your will that this time he shall say 'Yes.' But why has it also pleased You to let an evident and earthly tenderness be born in the heart of this old man who is judging her? Will you never grant, O Lord, that this world should be unburdened of every trace of humanity, so that at last we may in peace consecrate it to Thy glory alone?"[1]

For the critic Paul Hernadi, the Inquisitor's words evidence Anouilh's construction of the Inquisition as "a self-consuming urge, reminiscent of Freud's 'death-drive' (*Todestrieb*), in its human representatives."[2] The Inquisition here constitutes an abstract system of logic and governance which exposes the flaws and failings of human beings but is itself exempt from them, thereby representing an ideal which is at once both lifeless and sacred; humanity seeks to perform God's will on earth through the formulation and practice of institutional rites dedicated to a notion of human perfectibility which requires the eradication of humanity itself. Joan's trial is concerned not only with the reductive disciplining of Joan herself but also of her judges who must sacrifice their humanity to their office, which is dedicated to the greater glory of God. As a machinery of social discipline, it destroys the apparent autonomy of the individuals who serve it and recreates them entirely as manifestations of its own mechanisms; it constitutes a system of determination which extends its jurisdiction both over Joan as its object and over her judges as its agents.

In dramatic and cinematic interpretations of her trial, Joan is subjected to scrutiny on two levels -- firstly as the subject of the text, and secondly as the subject of the legal process enacted within the text. As a self-contained historical event, the trial is concerned with the

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[1] Anouilh, 1990, II: 89.
[2] Paul Hernadi, "Re-presenting the Past: *Saint Joan* and *L'Alouette*" in Bloom (ed.), 1992, p.158.

prosecution and punishment of Joan; to these ends, it examines her actions, both past and present, within a specific historical context. As a dramatic device, on the other hand, it functions as a means by which Joan's ethical and spiritual substance is examined; the trial is employed in order to evidence and justify her status as a saint to an implied audience situated outside both the trial and the text. Historical verisimilitude is subordinated (to differing degrees within differing texts) within the trial narrative, while the universal gestures and dynamics of myth and tragedy are foregrounded. Interviewed in *Amor-Film* (Lyon) about his own version of Joan's story, Robert Bresson points out that "The replies of Joan to the questions that are put to her serve not so much to give us information about events present or past (delivery of Orléans, coronation of the king, her capture) as to provoke upon her face in the film, the significant movements of her soul."[1] To this end, Bresson's film excludes much visual information which might serve to set the trial within a specific historical context. "Nothing happens by chance," says Susan Sontag of Bresson's general film style, "there are no alternatives, no fantasy; everything is inexorable. Whatever is not necessary, whatever is merely anecdotal or decorative, must be left out."[2] In *The Trial of Joan of Arc* this paring down of non-essential detail is evidenced in both costume and setting; the priests wear traditional, historically non-specific, ecclesiastical robes and gowns, the soldiers wear drab military uniforms of a style which suggests the late medieval period without ever truly evoking it, while Joan herself is simply dressed in rough soldiers' boots, breeches cut off just below the knee, and a dark and soldierly leather jerkin. Settings similarly evidence historical ambiguousness in their sparseness and simplicity. The camera presents the sets in fragments -- part of a stone wall or floor, a door, a window, the bed in Joan's cell. There are no establishing shots in Bresson's film; the material space in which the action unfolds is primarily one of textures -- stone, wood, fabrics, the heavy chains manacled about Joan's ankles -- which work visually in concert with the low key lighting, the general stillness of the

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[1] Quoted in Leo Murray, "Le Proces de Jeanne d'Arc" in Cameron (ed.), 1969, pp.95-96. No further information concerning the original source is provided.

[2] Susan Sontag, "Spiritual Style in the Films of Robert Bresson" in Sontag, *Against Interpretation* (London: Vintage, 1994), p.194.

camera and of the figures within the frame, and the rhythmic pattern of the editing during the interrogation scenes which dominate the narrative, to subordinate historicity to the spiritual drama of Joan's story. As Leo Murray observes, "The time may be chronological, but it would be impossible to call it historical. No dates are mentioned, there are no concrete references to the historical situation except in the presence of the English in a part of France that was in fact 'occupied' at the time."[1]

The structure of the trial provides a radically formal framework to cinematic reiterations of Joan's story; settings are largely limited to the courtroom and the prison cell and the "action" is inscribed in the interrogatory process. Bresson's film opens with a scene in which Joan's mother reads out the petition for Joan's rehabilitation to an assembly of Church dignitaries; the rest of the film is exclusively concerned with the trial of condemnation. The narrative is structured about a series of nine interrogations, five of which are conducted in the courtroom and four in Joan's cell. The dialogic nature of the trial is all-important: "My film was born of words, was constructed from words. My film is in questions and in answers for it was in this form that the interrogations were registered."[2] Throughout the first interrogation scene, the camera remains static and fixed upon Joan as she answers questions put to her from an off-screen source. At the end of the interrogation, the point-of-view is changed by a cut to a similarly static, chest-high shot of the Bishop, who is no longer asking questions but instead states his authority to conduct the trial. In subsequent interrogations, the film cuts back and forth between static shots of Joan and her prosecutors as the editing follows the rhythm of the questions and answers. " But I was content to use the monotony like a unified background upon which the nuances would be clearly drawn," Bresson told Jean Guitton in an interview for *Etudes Cinématographiques*. "I had more to fear from the slowness, the heaviness of the trial. So I attack the film and continue it in a very rapid rhythm."[3] The "rapidity" that Bresson

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[1] Leo Murray, "Le Procés de Jeanne d'Arc" in Cameron (ed.), 1969, p.95.
[2] Robert Bresson interviewed by Yvonne Baby in *Le Monde*. Quoted in Leo Murray, *ibid.*, p.93. No further information given regarding original source.
[3] "Entretien avec Robert Bresson et Jean Guitton" in Michel Estève (ed.), *Etudes Cinématographiques* Nos.71-73, 1962, p.93.

asserts for his film is entirely the property of the dialogue, which is the dynamic of the narrative, and of the editing. Physical movement within the frame is, with a few exceptions, either solemnly processional or limited to understated facial expressions and physical gestures; the figures of Joan and her judges are, for the most part, characterized by a stillness which serves to focus attention upon the spoken word.

The dense textures of Bresson's film and the fractured images of the material elements presented within each scene are suggestive of documentary realism, but the formal composition of the shots, the stillness both of the camera and of Joan's face during the interrogation scenes, and the frequent lack of emotion in either voice or facial expression as his actors recite their lines, all serve to communicate Bresson's hieratic intent. "It seems to me that the emotion here, in this trial (and in this film), should come not so much from the agony and death of Joan as from the strange air we breathe while she talks of her Voices, or of the crown of the angel, just as she would talk of one of us or this glass or this carafe,"[1] Bresson told Jean Guitton. The rigour of the legal process formalises both the narrative and the discourse; the construction of the supernatural in relation to Joan emerges through the displacement of the film's imagistic construction of the "ordinary," using the techniques of realist cinema, by the dialogic expression of the "extraordinary." By visually delineating that which can be described and known, Bresson's film at the same time indicates the limits of ordinary knowledge and signification, beyond which lies mystery: "I will say what I know but not everything," Joan announces at the end of her first interrogation. "I have come from God and have only to do His will here and I ask only to be sent back to God from whom I came." Her words refer us to an experience outside the concrete reality constructed by the film text, to a "para-reality" that is at once interior (to Joan herself) and supernaturally exterior (to the trial and to the "film-in-images"). "The supernatural in film is only the real rendered more precise," Bresson told James Blue. "Real things seen close up."[2]

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[1] "Entretien avec Robert Bresson et Jean Guitton" in Estève (ed.), 1962, pp.93-94.

[2] James Blue, *Excerpts from an Interview with Robert Bresson, June, 1965* (Los Angeles: James Blue, 1969), p.2.

Along with *Diary of a Country Priest* (1950), *A Man Escaped* (1956), and *Pickpocket* (1959), *The Trial of Joan of Arc* is one of four Bresson films constituting what Paul Schrader calls "the prison cycle,"[1] in which notions of free will and of confinement (both spiritual and physical) are explored. "All of Bresson's films have a common theme: the meaning of confinement and liberty," observes Susan Sontag. "The imagery of the religious vocation and of crime are used jointly. Both lead to 'the cell'."[2] A Manichean, dualistic relation of body and soul, of the corporeal and the spiritual, is encoded in the metaphor of the prison and the imprisoned individual. Bresson's Joan is trapped by the material power which is manifested in the concrete construction of the trial as an imprisoning environment -- the presence of the soldiers, the shots of her cell, the recurring images of solid stone walls and of the heavy chains about her ankles. She is trapped by the interrogations which seek to achieve her epistemological containment, and she is trapped by her own integrity, by her spiritual substance and by the holy destiny from which she cannot extricate herself since that which governs her also constitutes her identity. And she is also trapped by her own body, by the gravity of corporeal existence which prevents the flight of her soul into the Immanent which has claimed it.

A sense of the inevitability of human destiny pervades Bresson's film as the trial progresses inexorably towards the conclusion of Joan's martyrdom. "Joan of Arc seemingly chooses martyrdom of her own free will," notes Paul Schrader, "yet the film also repeatedly emphasizes that her fate is predetermined.....The only tension, as in predestinarianism, is whether or not she will choose her predestined fate."[3] And yet even this tension is absent from Bresson's film, as it is in all reiterations of Joan's tragedy. She will choose her fate because her fate has already chosen her. "Tragedy is always ironic," observes Oscar Mandel, "but it is not because an action *eventually* leads to the opposite of its intention, but because that opposite is grafted into the action from the very beginning."[4] Joan chooses

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[1] Schrader, 1972, p. 59.
[2] Sontag, 1994, p.186.
[3] Schrader, 1972, p.91.
[4] Mandel, 1973, p.24.

martyrdom because, in the final instance, it is only through death that she can make her life meaningful.

In *Discipline and Punish*, Foucault asserts that the chief function of disciplinary power is to 'train' "moving, confused, useless multitudes of bodies and forces into a multiplicity of individual elements -- small, separate cells, organic autonomies, genetic identities and continuities, combinatory segments."[1] To this end, Foucault argues, power engages its subjects in a disciplinary process of specification through the deployment of the techniques of "hierarchical observation, normalizing judgement and their combination in a procedure that is specific to it, the examination."[2] Such technologies of power are intrinsic to cinematic reconstructions of Joan of Arc's trial, both at the level of the film text as a discursive process of analysis, exposition, and definition, and at the level of the trial within the text as a disciplinary procedure enacted by the narrative. Under the omniscient eye of the camera, Joan is subjected to a network of multiple gazes (those of her omnipresent persecutors, of the camera, of the cinema audience) which place her body at the centre of the interrogatory imagination and its procedures of intimate discovery and psychic colonisation.

The prison cell and the courtroom represent not only Joan's confinement but also physically situate her as the object of surveillance. Her lack of freedom also deprives her of the degree of autonomy that is afforded by solitude and privacy as her imprisonment confines her to restricted and yet public spaces from which she cannot escape the evaluating gaze either of her captors (whether the judges or the ever-present guards in her cell) or of the camera. It is not for reasons of mere voyeurism that both Dreyer and Bresson use the device of the spyhole in several scenes set in Joan's cell. In Dreyer's film, it is initially Loiseleur's gaze which refers the camera to the spyhole; we see it from within Joan's cell, a small rectangular slot in the wall through which a movement indicates the presence of an unseen observer. Dreyer's camera does not share the observer's viewpoint, but rather indicates it as

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[1] Michel Foucault, *Discipline and Punish*, trans. Alan Sheridan (London: Penguin, 1977), p.170.
[2] *Ibid.*

a disturbingly intrusive feature of Joan's subjectivity. Bresson uses the spyhole both more frequently and more emphatically, repeatedly shooting through it so that Joan is framed within a ragged hole in the wall and seen from the point of view of the surreptitious onlookers who hold whispered conversations about her to which the viewer is privy though Joan herself is not (see Figure 4, p.117). Here, Leo Murray remarks, "the narrow vision of the prosecutors is emphasised....."[1] But the spyhole shots also serve to mark the distance between the audience as observer and Joan as textual subject, forcing the spectator to participate for a while in the conspiracy of gazes *within* the film text which configure Joan as the object of multiple disciplinary technologies.

By employing the device of the spyhole, both Dreyer and Bresson carry the enactment of Joan's trial beyond the formal interrogations of the courtroom; the disciplinary process of examination and evaluation is manifested in the literal enactment of the "normalizing gaze" that Foucault understands as the means by which it becomes possible "to qualify, to classify and to punish."[2] The trial serves each and all of these functions; observation, interrogation, and their combination as joint elements of epistemological examination, allow Joan's judges to define their subject (heretic, social outlaw) and decide upon her punishment (imprisonment when she confesses, death at the stake when she withdraws her confession). Cauchon launches his questions against Joan as against an intransigent identity which must be forced to conform to epistemological definition so that it may be categorized, contained, and neutralized within the inquisitorial discourse; it is the limit and authority of the disciplinary process which is here at stake and, over and over again, Joan eludes containment within its boundaries by referring herself to the transcendental uncertainties which lie beyond its outer reaches. "Do you consider yourself to be in a state of grace?" Cauchon enquires in Dreyer's film, seeking to trick Joan into making an assertion which will name her as a heretic. "If I am,

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[1] Leo Murray, "Le Proces de Jeanne d'Arc" in Cameron (ed.), 1969, p.95.
[2] Foucault, 1977, p.194.

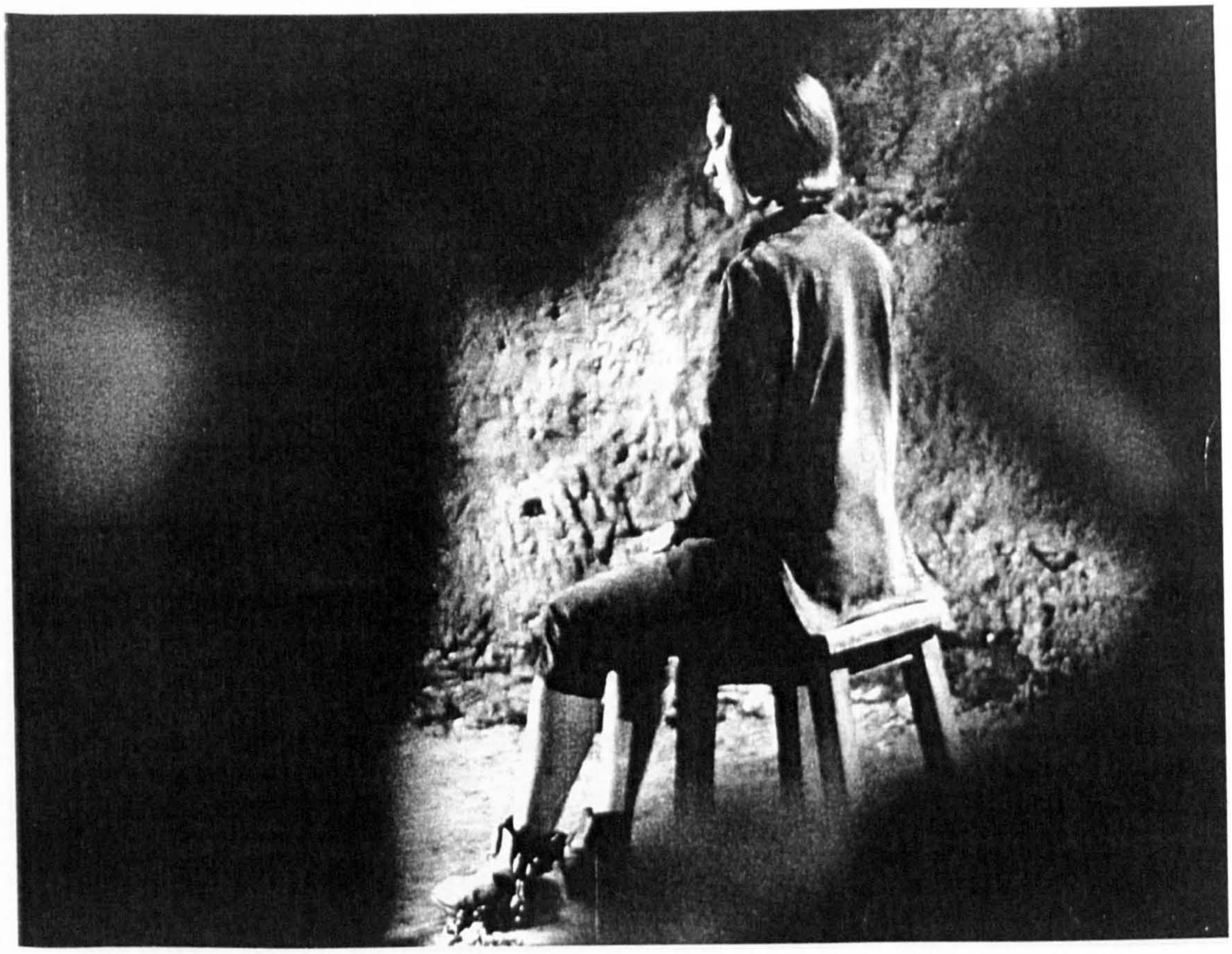

Figure 4. Joan (Florence Carrez) filmed through the spyhole in Bresson's *The Trial of Joan of Arc* (1962).

(BFI Stills, Posters, and Designs)

may God keep me there," Joan replies. "And if I am not, may He put me there." Again and again the judges try to pin Joan down; again and again she eludes them by situating herself at the right hand of God, outside the ordering of human authority.

In Jacques Rivette's *Jeanne la Pucelle*, there is no reconstruction of Joan's trial of condemnation -- a deliberate omission which signals the trial's ultimate failure to make Joan decipherable. The first half of the film -- titled *Les Batailles* -- is dedicated to the portrayal of Joan as a flesh-and-blood woman who, though chained to her destiny and driven by spiritual passion, is nevertheless a free spirit in the world of men. In the second half of the film -- significantly titled *Les Prisons* -- the narrative is concerned not with her interrogation but with her imprisonment. It is her containment, and the lack of autonomy that it configures, which gradually erodes Joan's spirit. Of her long examination, only her abjuration is re-enacted. Here, too, the notion of her containment is emphasised. The final session takes place in the courtyard of Rouen castle; high, windowless walls surround the open-air proceedings. Flanked by her guards, a pale-faced and exhausted Joan sits on a wooden platform facing the assembled Church dignitaries who are seated in tiered ranks under a canopy. A tight ring of armoured soldiers bearing long spears surrounds the whole gathering. The weight of power that is manifested in the massive castle walls and in the small army which guards the solitary Joan lends an overwhelming atmosphere of hopelessness to the scene. Joan signs the confession and, when the priest makes her add a cross after her name -- the symbol that Joan has always used to mark a document as false -- she lets out a shrill, hysterical laugh at the bitter irony of this last touch. Gaunt-faced, with deep shadows under her eyes, it seems that she is barely able to hold on to her sanity. Later on when, after having been continually abused by her guards, Joan resumes her male dress in the knowledge that by doing so she has sealed her fate, she does so as a final and desperate act of self-assertion against an environment in which she cannot live meaningfully and which she can escape only through death. In Rivette's film, there is no need to repeat the interrogatory dissection of Joan's identity; her character has already been fully-realized on its own terms and we do not need to

see the legal process in action in order to understand the awful bleakness and the corrosive impact of her incarceration. This much we may imagine.

Of Dreyer's *The Passion of Joan of Arc*, David Bordwell has observed that "two dramas are played in counterpoint: the political drama of a rigged trial and the spiritual drama of Joan's commitment to her vision."[1] The film begins with a claim to historical accuracy. A man's hands, filmed in close-up, leaf through the transcripts of Joan's trial at Rouen. The pages are facsimiles of the original documents upon which Dreyer based his script, and with these opening shots his film establishes historical authenticity by imagistically connecting the original written records with the cinematic reconstruction of the events that they describe. But here Dreyer is deliberately playing devil's advocate; the film apparently asserts an authoritative documentary realism founded upon the written word but goes on to subordinate it to a more powerful psychological realism constructed in images that continually oppose and thereby discredit much of the authority of the official history. The trial is at once the ritualized reenactment of the legal and historical literature, and a ritualized spiritual ordeal. Throughout the film the authority of the word, whether written or spoken, is continually called in to question; it is presented as a construct which is at best unreliable and at worst deceptive and tyrannical. An idea of "truth" is pursued through the tensions between material power and spiritual integrity and between history and metahistory, which are represented in the continually polarised textual opposition of the word and the image. James Schamus observes that the division between the text-in-words and the text-in-images is so extreme as to constitute a double narrative: "These two films -- the one made out of words, the other of faces -- play out a battle for narrative supremacy between text and image that is at the heart.....of Joan's story, as the judges try to trap her with their questions, to force her signature on the confession....."[2]

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[1] Bordwell, 1973, p.32.

[2] James Schamus, "Dreyer's Textual Realism" in Jytte Jensen (ed.), *Carl Th. Dreyer* (New York: Museum of Modern Art, 1988), p.59.

The spoken and written word are ascribed to the representatives of the Church and the State as the principle means by which they sanction and exercise their authority. Joan's persecutors are the agents and sole interpreters of written laws and of the prescriptive literature of Christianity -- both of which also constitute their instruments of epistemological power. Jytte Jensen notes that "in all Dreyer's films men read books and bibles, write documents and letters -- and speak for and on behalf of women, thus inscribing the expression and experiences of women within the language of the socially accepted male order."[1] Against this linguistic and literary authority, Joan's own words are presented as hesitant and emotionally honest responses to cleverly formulated questions which are articulated in order to trick, dominate, and epistemologically contain and colonise her; her verbal responses are not the free expression of her own experience and Joan's "voice" in the film is not primarily located in verbal speech but rather in gesture, facial expression, in the lexicon of symbols that Dreyer associates with her, and in the luminosity that the lighting creates about her. Often, Falconetti as Joan seems scarcely to form or frame the intertitled words; the apparent veracity of the spoken word is belied by the images of its articulation, images which imbue it with meanings beyond (and often contrary to) its verbal expression. The "text in images" allows expression of that which is left unspoken. Falconetti's performance yields powerful, evocative silences in which an unarticulated and unwritten narrative is established over and against the verbal and written process of the trial. By drawing attention to the space in and around the spoken word, the text-in-images functions to demonstrate the limits and ineffectuality of the historical record as a signifier of the "real" Joan.

Here, the tyranny of language resides in the word's intrinsic function as the means by which meanings are made through the recasting, and distortion, of concrete actualities as discursive elements conforming to a system of abstract rules. Institutions which draw their authority from written sources necessarily perform tyrannical "acts of meaning" upon their

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[1] Jytte Jensen, "Heretics, Witches, Saints, and Sinners" in Jensen (ed.), 1988, p.50.

subjects, since it is their function to mediate between the abstract structures of language and a concrete world which cannot satisfactorily conform to abstract laws. In order to create meaning, language must recreate the world within its discourses and, in order to do this, it must also either destroy or assimilate meanings which are alien, superfluous, or contrary to its power-invested syntax. The role of the agents (Joan's judges) of linguistically-defined and language-dependent governmental institutions (the Church, the legal system) is to compel objects (Joan) to comply with a rigid, abstract system of laws and codes. The trial is here reconfigured as a process of language, which is itself understood as a disciplinary technology of endless specification. In this instance, it is human identity (that of Joan) which the trial seeks to force into line with linguistic definitions. By implication, the *apparent* veracity of the linguistic disciplinary system manifested in film's construction of the discourses of institutional Christianity and its laws takes precedence over ontological contrarities, which must be destroyed *in the same act* which brings about their discursive reinvention. Any linguistic deceit is permissable so long as it serves to maintain the completeness of the constructed, abstract logic of the written text. In Dreyer's film, the word cannot be trusted as the signifier of truth; "truth" dwells with Joan in the realm of the "other," as do femaleness, transgressiveness, spirituality, and transcendence. The spiritual office of Joan's male persecutors is bestowed upon them by the false authority of the written word that they serve; in contrast, Joan's spirituality is represented in images which site it as a property of her individual identity and substance. Spirituality is associated with the individual rather than with the institution, with Joan's female body rather than with her male, be-robed persecutors, with the text-in-images rather than with the text-in-words.

The continual use of close-ups throughout the film was, Dreyer claimed, a technique dictated by the nature of the trial itself:

> "For me, it was before all else the technique of the official report which governed. There was, to start with, this trial, with its ways, its own techniques, and that technique is what I tried to transpose to the film. These were the questions, these were the answers -- very short, very crisp. There was,

> therefore, no other solution than to place close-ups behind those replies."[1]

But the film's visual architecture of close-ups does far more than simply construct images which follow through the dialogic rhythm of question and responses. The decision to shoot in close-up and yet not beautify any of the magnified faces with make-up contrives an apparent nakedness of expression through which the textual opposition of verbal and imagistic "truth" is manifested. With the exception of Antonin Artaud, who plays Massieu, and the (uncredited) actors who play Ladvenu and de Houppeville (all three priests are "good guys" in the film), Dreyer assembled a cast of male grotesques to play Joan's judges. Filmed from below using high-contrast lighting, the film greatly exaggerates the malevolence sought in their facial expressions. While close-ups of the naked face work in favour of Falconetti as Joan, and the lighting is used complimentarily to illuminate her as if from within, Dreyer's film constantly risks devaluing the tyranny of her persecutors by overstating their unpleasantness. Subjected to the scrutiny of the close-up and the contrived expressivity of light and shadow, Loyseleur's hooded, sideways glances reveal his "true" nature to be sly and calculating, Cauchon's verbal assaults appear unnecessarily vengeful and cruel and, at times, quite mad, d'Estivet's physical brutishness describes the character of a sadistic bully, while the impassive Warwick is exposed as a hard-hearted pragmatist who will stop at nothing to achieve his goal. Their paucity of spirituality, and the material and symbolic nature of their power, is, like Joan's spiritual integrity and goodness, apparently incribed in the flesh.

Joan's persecutors are never as "naked" as Joan, however, and this in itself helps to configure the falseness of their spiritual authority. The judges inhabit the robes of religious office which, as insignia of the doctrines that they both serve and employ, are the symbolic manifestation of their material power. Their robes also confer a certain anonynimity upon them and, together with the fact that none of Joan's persecutors is ever referred to by his name in the film, construct the judges less as individuals than as the agents of a cold and

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[1] Carl Dreyer in Andrew Sarris (ed.), *Interviews with Film Directors* (New York: Avon, 1967), p.145.

repressive institution. Their robes reduce their humanity and function as uniforms. The judges' authority is concrete and material, their power is that which is bestowed upon them by the institution they serve; it is not integral to them as individuals but is conferred upon them from without, by human rather than by divine agency. Their robes of office signify the exteriority of their spiritual status, whereas for Joan almost the reverse is true; it is her interior, spiritual substance which has determined her costume. "When I have done what God sent me to do I shall resume woman's dress," she tells Cauchon, thus associating her dress with her personal integrity and her mission.

Underlying and reinforcing the disciplinary process of the trial is always the implicit threat of violence encoded in the presence of soldiers, weapons, chains, and the instruments of torture that the film displays to devastating effect. The physical threat to Joan is signalled throughout the textual apparatus, in the high angle shots and direct lighting which render her both angelic and vulnerable, and in framing which situates her in oppressive spatial relation to the material objects around her. Paul Schrader observes that, in Dreyer's film, "the architecture of Joan's world literally conspires against her; like the faces of her inquisitors, the halls, doorways, furniture are on the offensive, striking, swooping at her with oblique angles, attacking her with hard-edged chunks of black and white."[1] There is no circumstance in which Joan is wholly free from visual intrusions or imagistic assaults of one kind or another; the quiet privacy of her pleasure in the cross of shadow is interrupted by the portentous arrival of Loyseleur, the crown of straw which is the intensely personal expression of her faith is employed by her guards as an instrument with which to torment her. The "normalizing gaze" is an ever-present aspect of the native chiarascuro of Joan's surroundings, and underlying its operation is a thinly-veiled physical menace that becomes increasingly explicit as the narrative progresses towards its violent climax.

The brutal nature of the powers controlling Joan's trial is indicated from the very beginning of the film. In the opening scene, as the judges file into the courtroom and take

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[1] Schrader, 1972, p.123.

their seats, the camera pans across the soldiers who are watching in the background, helmeted and bearing long spears, all the more menacing for their relaxed postures and apparent idleness and disinterest. Their constant presence in the background serves to reveal the trial as little more than a ritual, a legal preamble to the inevitable conclusion of Joan's death. That the priests are party to the physical threat to Joan is equally clear; an exchange of looks between Loyseleur and Warwick indicates the priests' complicity with the English army before the trial has even begun. D'Estivet's assault on Joan is the first occasion on which the suppressed violence that pervades the courtroom erupts through the legal facade. "Rank blasphemy!" cries the massive priest; as he rises to his feet; filmed from below, mouth working furiously, his great bulk looms large and he fills the screen with his menacing physicality. He moves towards Joan and towers over her as she sits, wide-eyed with shock and fear, staring away from him into the distance. Dreyer cuts between medium close-ups of the still, silent, stricken Joan, and extreme close-ups of d'Estivet's obscenely contorting mouth. D'Estivet's fury mounts until at last he spits in her face -- a gesture of such extreme contempt and intimate violation that its visual impact is almost as great as if he had raped her. Immediately after this event, De Houppeville comes forward to pronounce Joan a saint and prostrate himself at her feet. His departure from the courtroom is immediately followed, ominously, by that of the soldiers. The shot of the soldiers is high and semi-abstract, a procession of helmets and spears following in de Houppeville's wake. The sequence is a telling one; not only are the priests party to the latent violence that surrounds and is focused upon Joan, but they are also its perpetrators. The judges implicitly endorse d'Estivet's violation of Joan by making no attempt to restrain or reprimand him; they make no concession to civility despite the fact the the supposed impartiality of the legal process has been decisively compromised. Rather it is de Houppeville, the lone voice of compassion and dissent, who provokes their condemnation.

It is the scene in the torture chamber which brings the threat of violence to the fore, presenting a series of terrifying images that make explicit the lengths to which Joan's judges

are prepared to go in order to defeat her. Initially, Joan is interrogated in the torture chamber much as she has been in the courtroom -- only now, of course, her surroundings are very different and the thin veneer of civility presented by the courtroom has been stripped away altogether to reveal the concrete reality of the judges' power and of Joan's situation. Yet even here Joan retains her faith and her integrity; she will not renounce her voices, she will not sign the recantation. Her steadfast responses drive the priests into a frenzy of frustration. Dreyer cuts from their thrusting, furious faces to a close-up of a heavy chain which slowly raises a vicious hook into the frame. With this image begins a sequence of 69 rapid cross-cuts; Joan, the increasingly furious priests, the torturer, a huge spiked wheel turning ever faster, an array of serrated blades in stark silhouette, Joan's chained feet, the spiked wheel filling the screen.....all shot in close-up and extreme close-up so that the tactile impact of the images is almost overwhelming. Finally, Dreyer cuts back and forth between just three images -- the huge spiked wheel racing ever faster, the terror-stricken Joan, and Cauchon in three-quarter profile, raging, his face dark and demonic with wrath. Still Joan defies him: "Truly if you separate my soul from my body I will not deny the truth of what I said before....." Shaking with fear, she points an accusing finger round the assembled judges: "And if I say anything I shall afterwards say that you had compelled me to say it by force." The wheel turns faster and faster, its spikes ripping down the frame. The sequence reaches a crescendo, then crashes as Joan passes out and falls to the ground.

The scene in the torture chamber transforms the implied threat indicated by the soldiers' presence in the courtroom into a tangible and explicit demonstration of violent potential but, as the scene renders the symbolic images of violence concrete, it also renders the concrete images symbolic. Much as Joan has become the film's emblem of holiness, so too has Cauchon become its emblem of the savagery underlying the "civilized" progress of the trial. He has revealed the full extent and nature of the power that he represents and all of its oppressive implictions; but so too has Joan revealed her own power. Violence will not break

her faith and the duplicity of the word will break it only temporarily; her death, we now know, will be the final confirmation and triumphant assertion of her spiritual integrity.

CHAPTER SIX

TRANSGRESSION

Dramatic accounts of historical events neither deny their own fictitiousness nor assert objectivity. Instead, they couch their claims to tell the "truth" in historical verisimilitude, in modes of realism, and in those perspectives and insights particular to fiction. In Victor Fleming's *Joan of Arc*, a familiar Hollywood medievalism determines every detail of costume and setting; the film's claim to authenticity is evidenced in everything from the ornate bridles of the horses to the splendour of Rheims cathedral. Medieval-looking maps are shown intermittently to chart Joan's progress against the English. The non-diegetic words of a male narrator lend a weight of authority to the version of events that unfolds on the screen, representing an attempt to preclude any reading but that which the film text itself authorises. In contrast, Bresson's *The Trial of Joan of Arc* makes little attempt to recreate history in the *mise-en-scène*; instead, it makes its claim to authenticity explicit by means of a personalized statement from the director which is presented in intertitles shown at the beginning of the film:

> "Joan died on 30 May 1431. She received no burial and no portrait remains of her. But we have a better portrait: her words before the judges of Rouen. I have used authentic texts and notes from the Trial of Condemnation. For the last instants I have used the witness statements and testimony from the Trial of Rehabilitation which took place 25 years later. When the film starts, Joan has been imprisoned for several months in a room at Rouen castle."

Having announced its fidelity to the historical record, the film's claim to be telling the "truth" of Joan of Arc is further reinforced through Bresson's austere film style. The black-and-white photography, fragmented images, and minimal camera movements, work in concert with a narrative that is motored by dialogue rather than by dramatic action; the aesthetic codes and

narrative pace are, as we have already seen, those of documentary realism. Leo Murray pronounces the film as "perhaps the most authentic portrait of Joan that the cinema has given us to date"[1] -- a sentiment with which it is easy to sympathise and impossible to agree. Despite the claims of the written statement with which the reconstruction of Joan's trial opens, the film is not concerned with the imaginative reconstruction of Joan as a fully present, flesh-and-blood individual; as much as the broken images and foregrounded dialogue through which her story is related, "Joan" functions as a signifier of something that is at once within and beyond herself. The real subject of Bresson's film is not the historical Joan of Arc but a notion of the transcendent for which she is only a vehicle. Through a phenomenological process of reduction, Joan's humanity is pared away in the textual pursuit of a certain divine essence, a distant and abstract spiritual grace that is wholly alien to orthodox notions of portraiture and "authenticity".

Jacques Rivette's *Jeanne la Pucelle* is a bleakly realistic, and wholly unglamourised, reconstruction of the world of the later Middle Ages. Interior sets are generally austere, with floors and walls of dressed stone and a few items of the heavy wooden furniture typical of the period. Costumes are authentic-looking, but more muted than their more familiar Hollywood equivalents; the drab battledress of Joan and her soldiers looks as if it has really been worn on the campaign trail and the battlefield. Simulated natural lighting disallows the technicolor garishness of Hollywood medievalism and lends the *mise-en-scène* an ordinariness that suggests realism. Only in the scene of the Dauphin's coronation at Rheims cathedral is the film's austere tone banished in a wealth of reds, golds, and vibrant blues, and in the gorgeous textures of silk, velvet, and ermine. At the end of the film, a statement made in the titles asserts the film's meticulous fidelity to the historical record. The film, it says, is based upon the trial records; as secondary sources, it cites the scholarly works of world-renowned Joan of Arc expert Régine Pernoud and of the eminent French medieval historian George Duby. With these credentials, the film seeks to give its claims to accuracy the same weight of authority as the historical works upon which it is based.

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[1] Leo Murray, "Le Proces de Jeanne d'Arc" in Cameron (ed.), 1969, p.90.

By such means as these, the historical film assumes something of the status of an historical account and every detail of Joan's story, whether verifiable or not, is presented as *something which actually happened*. In every retelling of her story, Joan performs a fictive choreography of her life within the reconstructed moment of its history. Through the text's claims to have discovered and faithfully recreated the past, modern anxieties about Joan's transgressiveness are temporally displaced onto the reenactment of her career, persecution, and death. The quasi-historical narratives of film and drama confront the problem of Joan's transgressiveness and accommodate it by constructing ideological and aesthetic explanations which operate and are expounded through the formal structures of tragedy disguised as historical truth. Joan is chosen as a subject because she is both strange and estranged, in the present as much as in the past; the discursive challenge lies in the engagement with, and reconfiguration of, these suggestive qualities.

In Marco de Gastyne's film *La Merveilleuse Vie de Jeanne d'Arc* (1928), Joan's transgressiveness is treated as both compelling and disturbing. Her arrival at the Dauphin's court at Chinon is greeted by its denizens with a mixture of curiosity, fascination, and contemptuous incredulity. The ladies and gentlemen of the court plan to have some fun at her expense; in a scene which is similarly enacted in many other versions of her story,[1] they seat Gilles de Rais in the Dauphin's place upon the throne before Joan enters the room, in order to trick and mock her. A standard shot/reverse shot shows three aristocratic young women, resplendent in long flowing gowns and extravagantly high medieval head-dresses, watching with rapt attention as Joan enters. She walks towards the throne along a clear path which has formed in the midst of the assembled courtiers. No-one speaks; all eyes are upon Joan and every head turns to watch her as she passes. She is sumptuously dressed in a loosely-belted velvet tunic which is trimmed with fur, a short fighting cloak trimmed with gold,

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[1] The story in which the Dauphin is substituted by a courtier and Joan miraculously sees through the trick and recognizes the real Dauphin in the crowd is almost certainly apocryphal but has become a standard episode in retellings of her drama. It occurs in Cecil B. De Mille's *Joan the Woman*, Fleming's *Joan of Arc*, Anouilh's *The Lark*, and Shaw's *Saint Joan*, to name but a few. It is used to offer explanation as to how Joan was able to convince the court that she had indeed been sent by God. Marina Warner notes that the story first appears in "the memoirs of Pierre Sala, *Hardiesses des Grands Rois et Empereurs*, written in 1516" (Warner, 1992, p.57).

leggings, and close-fitting boots which stop halfway up her calves; a sword hangs at her waist. Her dark hair is cut in the page-boy style; her face is made-up with pale foundation and strongly lit from the front to bestow definition and radiant nobility upon her fine, regular features. Her expression is a mixture of pride and resolve and she moves with confident ease, placing one hand upon her sword-belt and swaggering a little, as if aware of the fine figure she cuts and of the mesmerising effect she is having upon the men and women who are present in the throne-room. Visible high up on the wall behind her is a row of imposing statues of former kings; each set in its own alcove, they gaze sternly down upon her presumption as she relentlessly advances in search of the Dauphin. There is a cut to a medium shot of a well-dressed and effete young nobleman who is standing and holding the hand of a woman seated beside him. The woman is gazing intently at Joan and seems to have altogether forgotten the presence of her male consort. He raises her hand as if to kiss it but she impatiently snatches it from his grip, without taking her eyes off Joan. It is Joan alone who now commands the attention of the women in the room. She is not fooled for an instant by Gilles de Rais'[1] impersonation of the Dauphin and she quickly recognizes the true object of her visit lurking amongst the crowd; she drops to her knees before him. Utterly sure of herself, magnificent in her "Prince Valiant" costume, the scene presents her as simply more glamorous, more beautiful, and more intriguing than anyone else present. Her foray into the royal court is a success on every level; the scene signals the triumph of inner nobility and grace over the decadence and cynicism of the aristocracy as she transforms the hostile, mocking courtiers into her admirers and supporters. In the scene that follows immediately

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[1] Gilles de Rais, 'the original Bluebeard,' rode at Joan's side in her campaigns against the English at Orléans, Paris, and Patay. During his long career as a satanist and sexual sadist, he murdered children (mainly young boys, unlike the fairy-story version of his character where his victims are his brides) in numbers estimated to be in the hundreds. Despite the fact that his victims were local children who mysteriously vanished from his estates whenever he was in residence, his position as marshal of France and as one of the most powerful and wealthy of the great French dukes made it almost impossible for the authorities to investigate him as a suspect. However, he became increasingly mad and careless and was eventually tried and hanged as a sorcerer and murderer in 1440; the tenor of the charges brought against him is remarkably similar to that of the charges made against Joan nine years earlier. A number of books -- most notably, Michel Tournier's fine novel *Gilles et Jeanne* (Paris: Gallimard, 1983) -- have explored the fascinating association between the God-fearing Joan and her murderous, devil-worshipping comrade. However, despite the obviously dramatic nature of the subject, no film has yet been made relating this intriguing aspect of Joan's story.

afterwards, it is the ladies of the court who dress Joan in her armour; she is no longer their potential plaything but rather has become their hero and champion.

De Gastyne's film, one of the last silents to be made, appeared in 1928 and was rapidly eclipsed by the release of Dreyer's great masterpiece shortly afterwards in the same year. It has little of the spiritual force of Dreyer's film but it is nevertheless a powerful and moving production, shot in glossy black-and-white, with spectacular quasi-medieval settings. The lengthy, thrilling battle-scenes were filmed in the Tarne region and at Carcassonne and hundreds of soldiers from the French army were recruited to enact them. Simone Genevois is the first actress to have played a thoroughly androgynous Joan in cinema and throughout the film there is much emphasis upon Joan's cross-dressing. In the scene described above, the transvestite Joan of Arc is presented in a manner unique among filmic representations of her; gorgeously and foppishly androgynous, she is clearly sited as the object of desiring/admiring female gazes. As she makes her way across the Dauphin's court, the scene cuts back and forth in order to prioritise the responses that she elicits from the women who are present. The peculiar interloper whom the courtiers meant to ridicule instead supplants the men in the room as the object of enraptured feminine interest. The scene is a brief one but it is nevertheless deliberate, explicit, and extraordinary; nowhere else in cinema is the erotic, lesbian appeal of Joan's gender transgression so strongly implied as it is here. She usurps both masculine and aristocratic privilege and, in the process, outperforms male sexual appeal much as she will later outperform male martial skill.

In every version of her story, Joan of Arc is an innately disruptive and charismatic presence, compelling precisely because her mere presence is a flamboyant flouting of society's written and unwritten rules. She defies the conventions which define both social class and gender, effortlessly crossing and blurring the boundaries of the categories which are the very building-blocks of the established social order. Joan's transgressiveness constantly inflects and alters the dialectics of her drama; a fluid substance of uncertainty and anxiety underlies the superficially straightforward conflictual oppositions from which her tragedy is constructed. The perspectives constantly shift and the matter of exactly what it is

that she represents at any given moment is confused. Almost every aspect of her story and character, as it emerges from the historical account, is fractured by ambiguities and paradoxes. Joan is female but does not in any sense represent orthodox "feminine" interests as they are inscribed within and by patriarchal order; her transvestism and "masculine" career problematically configure a vision of humanity which is beyond gender. In both her dress and her actions, she transcends the restrictions and concerns conventionally associated with her sex -- and, indeed, those associated with the opposite sex. She is a commoner who usurps aristocratic privilege, but her absolutist dedication to her monarch disallows twentieth century attempts to identify her as a species of proto-democrat. She is a nationalist and a rebel, a traditionalist and a radical, a devout Christian who nevertheless defies the Church, a chivalrous knight in shining armour and an unmannered farmgirl, an autocrat and an outlaw. Joan is never quite one thing or the other and yet she is always and emphatically herself. It is precisely the all-pervasive fluid qualities of her identity and actions which make her such a troublesome and intriguing dramatic subject; her ambiguities allow innumerable interpretations of her character and story, but at the same time inspire a deep-seated cultural desire, perhaps even a need, to pin her down and contain her within those same interpretations.

Joan's transgressiveness makes her tragedy quite unlike that of the only other heroic female figure of comparable cultural stature -- Antigone. Sophocles' great heroine is engaged in a confrontation born of ordinary, binaric gender conventions which are set on a collision course only by the particular circumstances of her brother's death. The conflict is centred upon the male; Antigone seeks to reclaim Polyneices' body for burial and Creon steadfastly refuses to permit his dead enemy the honour of such a ceremony. The private and familial female sphere of interest represented by Antigone is thereby set against the public and political masculine concerns of Creon. The individual confronts the State, as in Joan of Arc's drama, but here the polarised interests are not those of outsider and insider, of the transgressor and the guardian of hierarchical order, but rather are those of two essentially orthodox components of the established social order each striving to assert its own

jurisdiction over the corpse of Polyneices. The power of life and death resides with Creon, and in the face of this inalienable masculine prerogative grieving womanhood voices its own inalienable moral right to bring home and mourn its dead kinsmen. As Hegel remarks, Antigone and Creon "are seized and broken by that very bond which is rooted in the compass of their own social existence."[1]

Despite her outspokenness and refusal to surrender to Creon's bully-boy tactics, Antigone is neither a rebel, in the socio-political sense, nor a revolutionary. Her actions are entirely consistent with conventional socio-cultural constructions of womanhood which place women at the centre of home and family and nowhere else. She seeks only to assert the limited and traditional female prerogatives associated with the family and she does so not as a challenge to masculine authority but rather in order to ensure that her brother is afforded the same respect as other men; he too must have his rightful place among the mourned and honoured dead. Antigone's is in many ways a vicarious rebellion; in the narrative of her tragedy, her character is entirely inscribed as that of sister to the dead Polyneices, whose revered and unquiet memory is the real instigator of her actions. The dialectics of the conflict in which she is involved are clear-cut; the individual versus the State, private versus public, family loyalty versus political expediency. The subject female unhappily confronts male authority and asks of it only that it honour its traditional obligation to return the body of the dead man to his kin for burial. If anyone, it is Creon who is the transgressor, for it is Creon who disregards the obligations inherent in his position -- a moral sin for which he will, in the end, pay dearly. Antigone, on the other hand, never really steps outside the "female" domestic domain; she does not rebel against the subject status of womanhood but merely requires that its claims upon the family are honoured. It is not Creon's power and position of dominance that she challenges but rather his failure properly to discharge the duties that go along with it.

Antigone's character and tragic situation are entirely the product of artistic invention; so far as we can ever know, there has never been an historical record evidencing the existence of a real Antigone or a real Creon. Their confrontation is a pure expression of the aesthetics

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[1] Hegel, 1920, p. 324.

and logic of tragedy; it is tragedy which bespeaks them, not they who bespeak tragedy. Joan of Arc is an altogether different creature, one which brings the chaos of a living history into tense relation with the formal structures of the tragic narrative. While Antigone's drama conforms in every respect to the Hegelian model of tragedy -- indeed, Hegel describes its conflicts as "the purest forces of tragic representation"[1] -- that of Joan of Arc does so only through a degree of conscious artifice imposed at a structural level. Beyond the surface rigour of its narrative reiteration, the conflicts represented by her story do not function as straightforward confrontations between rigidly dialectical ethical positions but instead conflate as mobile aspects of a broader crisis arising from Joan's transgressiveness. The tragedy into which her history is translated conforms to an orthodox structure of ethical opposition only in so far as we can look *through* rather than *at* her transgressions. This is not to say that her drama is not built upon oppositions, or that the historical data concerning her life does not also yield them, since there are clear confrontations involved in both; but the challenge of the Joan figure lies in its liminal relationship to the polarised positions upon which the tragic conflict is founded. The very notion of opposition, inherent to tragic drama, requires that she be contained within the boundaries which delineate particular classifications of individual and social identity; the tragic conflict reduces multiple, variegated differences, and the ambiguities that are inherent to them, to polarised absolutes. Where the tragic protagonist is female, gender is perhaps inevitably foregrounded as a site of ethical conflict. As in *Antigone*, femininity confronts masculinity through any number and combination of those binary oppositions inherent to discourses of gender. But Joan's transgressiveness sets her outside and apart from the opposed categorical constructs of both masculinity and femininity. She represents both and neither; she is "other" not only in relation to the conventions which describe maleness but also to those which describe femaleness, since the orthodoxies of neither gender category adequately describe or contain her.

The troublesomeness of Joan of Arc, as both an historical and a dramatic subject, is entirely the property of her transgressiveness, which defies the efficacy of orthodox

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[1] Hegel, 1920, p.318.

discourses about gender and social class and challenges the hierarchical ordering processes which inform them. As Foucault has demonstrated, discourses are engaged in relations of power; any power relationship involves a correlated system of knowledge, and *vice-versa*. Notions of gender, social class, and race, construct identities in terms of particularity and perceived differences which are rendered as oppositions, described in terms of inclusivity and exclusivity, and involved in intricate relations of domination and subjection. The constructed oppositions of socio-cultural categories such as man and woman, white man and black man, aristocrat and peasant, are created by and saturated with evaluative interpretations, with notions of superiority and inferiority, which invest them with hierarchical import. In so far as it can be described and fixed, human multiplicity serves the interests of the power/knowledge continuum, enabling it to establish a seemingly coherent whole consisting of categorical differentiations and relationships that are interdependent and consequently self-perpetuating.

By constructing intricately detailed templates from which any divergence may be usefully configured as a deviance (with all the implications and consequence that such a configuration entails), the discourses of science, religion, social and psychoanalytical theory, and so on, function to contribute a weight of inevitability to the procedures of specification. They furnish categorical constructs with confirmatory scientific "proofs" which assert their "truthfulness," freezing deterministic cohesions of form and meaning within wider interpretative concepts of the "natural" and the "unnatural." That which conforms, which faithfully represents and inhabits its ascribed position in the deterministic definitional schema, is constituted as obedient to inviolable "natural" laws; that which resists, which is unfaithful to its prescribed discursive identity, is, by default, "unnatural." The transgressor is literally an "outlaw" and is therefore subject to the disciplinary procedures by which means the social order enforces its dependence upon the conformity and collusion of its subject constituent elements. Notions of the "natural" enable categorical constructs to conceal their artificiality behind an essentialist association of the object with its supposed properties, of the form with its constructed meaning. Through the investment of categories as normal, natural, and

inevitable, the machinery of power functions and maintains itself with maximum efficiency. Together, such categories constitute an economy of meanings and values encoded by and contained within "naturalised" identities that privileged groups of all varieties have a vested interest in maintaining. Notions of right and wrong attach themselves not only to the moral codes governing action and behaviour but also to the social codes governing *being*. That which conforms is deemed "right"; that which differs and diverges is deemed "wrong" and is subjected to disciplinary redress.

Complex, pervasive, and insidious as they are, the mechanisms of definitional procedure are dependent upon the immutability and veracity of form as a signifier in order that identities and meanings may be described and fixed. Women, to take the example most central to this study, must *identifiably* belong to the constructed gender category which prescribes the socio-cultural meaning and value of "woman" in order for the category of "man" to maintain its meaning and value for men. Where form is mutable, or ambiguous, or deceptive, categorical differentiations break down and the subject defies objectification and fixity. The final objective of definitional procedures is stasis, since the value with which each category is invested depends upon its hierarchical relation to other categories which therefore must be rendered constant, consistent, and easily identifiable. It is the latter requirement which invests clothing with its astonishing significance and socio-cultural import; from the Sumptuary Laws of Elizabethan England, which reserved certain fabrics and styles of garment for particular ranks and classes and which were used to prosecute sartorial trespassers, to the self-policing of the general public, which still occasionally aims verbal and physical abuse at those who dress "differently," clothing has served a crucial function as a signifier of social status and identity. It is transgression which remarks the artificiality of such signifiers and classifications, which remarks the difference between seeming and being, between the constructed and the concrete. Transgression disregards the boundaries and refuses the protocol of epistemological fidelity.

A deep-seated anxiety about morphological unconstancy and the permeability of category boundaries surfaces in the story of Joan of Arc as she turns her back on home and family,

goes everywhere in her opulent male clothing, consorts on equal terms with captains-of-war, archbishops, dukes, and kings, and rides into battle at the head of an army. As Marina Warner observes,

> "By assuming the forms that the interpreters of right and wrong, the dominant arbiters of society, usually understood to be right, by pretending to such dazzling effect, Joan posed a severe problem about the relationship of intrinsic to extrinsic value. She showed that one did not have to be a nobleman to be a nobleman."[1]

Joan dissolves the sartorial, behavioural, and performative conventions which are the means by which notions of gender and of social class are delineated and maintained. Like all transgressive identities and acts, her transvestism demonstrates the constructed nature and uncertainty of definitional categories, revealing their boundary lines to be neither inevitable nor inviolable. Her cross-dressing and successful "masculine" career combine to cast doubt upon the stability of all identities and relationships which are described in the absolute terms of inclusion and exclusion. Her transgressiveness introduces a dimension of fluid unconstancy which threatens, and achieves, displacement, intimate trespass, and the usurpation of privileged positions. Transvestism, Marjorie Garber argues, is "the disruptive element that intervenes, not just a category crisis of male and female, but the crisis of category itself."[2] A single transgressive act threatens to undermine not only the specific boundaries which it crosses but also, by implication, all such boundaries, since it challenges the very notion of the absoluteness of limits upon which they are founded and upon which their efficacy depends. And, because all categories are involved in relations of domination and subjection, transgression threatens to undermine the social order at the operational level of the power structure which functions through, and is realized in, disciplinary discursive practices.

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[1] Warner, 1992, p.159.
[2] Marjorie Garber, *Vested Interests: Cross-dressing and Cultural Anxiety* (New York and London: Routledge, 1992), p.17.

In the obsessive cultural reiteration of Joan's story, it is not the historical specificities of her life which are called into question; rather, as a consequence of her transgressiveness, it is the discursive and epistemological processes by which means the historical account is constructed which are themselves exposed to scrutiny. The historical narrative, in both its "factual" and its fictional forms, represents an attempt to seize, concretize, explain, and neutralize the collisions of order and disorder, epistemology and actuality, form and meaning, which emerge everywhere in relation to Joan. In the imaginative text, the narrative is developed through a process of translation, which mixes fact and invention and recasts the historical data in the formal structures of tragedy. The process begins at the level of the verifiable events of Joan's history which historians have already worked up into narrative form. From this, a still more imaginative history is developed, one which has the depth and coherence of fiction. The documented events of Joan's life serve as certain compass-points about which is constructed, by means of inventive interpretation, the detailed, fictive geography of her life; her motives, thoughts, undocumented words, and actions, are read into the thin, ostensibly objective material of the historical record and are themselves presented as "truths" of the same order. The other individuals whose presence and actions form part of Joan's story are similarly reconstructed and, through these secondary characters and the institutions which they represent, the imaginative text reconstructs the past in order to confront Joan at the level of her own history.

Here, at the level of the fictionalised historical discourse, Joan's transgressiveness situates her in the category of the "unnatural." It is constructed as troublesome; it disrupts category boundaries and remarks cultural uncertainties about the order of things. The imaginative text uses and interprets the historical account in such a way as to undermine the subversive implications inherent to the raw documentary material while at the same time reconfiguring them as signifiers of Joan's saintliness. Her gender, social class, and religious transgressions are downplayed and concealed behind invented explanations which are authoritatively presented as historical "truths." In addition, her transgressions are repressed at

the level of representation, wherein either Joan's feminine or masculine qualities are emphasised in ways which confirm rather than undermine gender orthodoxy.

As well as the historical and fictional aspects of the narrative development of Joan's story, the matter of her posthumous destiny also informs its constructions, inventions, and interpretations. The modern imagination approaches Joan as a subject in the knowledge that she has become a saint. The notion of her holiness pervades and influences every aspect of her historical and fictional reconstruction; Joan's transgressiveness must also be given its spiritual dimension. The imaginative text engages with Joan's transgressive identity and actions in an effort to neutralize them, to deny them by means of explanatory tactics, to render them as signifiers of her transcendence of earthly, human concerns and restrictions. The mythic configuration of Joan of Arc's story begins in this over-reaching of her history, wherein the epistemological processes of the historical discourse themselves come under scrutiny in the discourse of myth and to which we shall return in greater detail in Chapter 8 of this study.

What is at stake in the endlessly reimagined history of Joan of Arc is nothing less than the epistemological construction and control of the Other, upon which the human ordering of the world relies. The irreducible differences upon which orthodox notions of gender depend are severely compromised by Joan's refusal to conform to their prescriptive paradigms. Her androgynous performance negates the power-invested, polarised relation of male to female. A concern to reinstate that which Baudrillard refers to as "radical otherness"[1] informs and shapes the reimagined, fictionalized historical narrative's engagement with its slippery, ambiguous subject. The androgynous Joan figure becomes the raw material in a process of epistemological production which seeks to dismantle and recreate her. "The secret form of the Other is what has to be reconstituted, as in anamorphosis, starting with the fragments and tracing its broken lines, its lines of fracture"[2] preaches Baudrillard to a world he imagines to be obsessed with and confused by ambiguities, in an essay in which he at once laments the reduction of the symbolism of the exotic to mere difference and asserts the illusory

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[1] Jean Baudrillard, *The Transparency of Evil* (London & New York: Verso, 1995), p.138.
[2] *Ibid.*, p.155.

nature of that same reduction. For Baudrillard, otherness is "irreducible as a symbolic rule of the game, as a rule of the game that governs the world."[1] In this, he is surely right; without otherness, the "game" (or power/knowledge system) collapses in on itself, losing its certain, unassailable logic and its carefully maintained and delicately balanced structural stasis. But it is not otherness *per se* that the "game" requires; it is the specific formulations of the other that its rules prescribe and upon which its coherence depends. Thus, Joan of Arc's transvestism configures her otherness in relation to *both* masculinity *and* femininity and is problematic since the power/knowledge "game" requires her to conform to the feminine construct in binary opposition to the masculine; the "third alternative" of transgressive otherness is entirely disallowed.

The reconstruction of Joan's trial and death at the stake allows the expression of cultural anxieties about Joan's transgressiveness through the medium of her prosecution, where they can be expounded from a distance, in the context of historical actuality, without compromising Joan's status of a saint. The interior text of the trial allows her "unnaturalness" to be explicitly stated, through the agency of her prosecutors, in a manner which complements the metahistorical construction of her status as a 'supernatural' and holy figure. The denomination of her transgression as both "unnatural" (within its historical context) and "supernatural" (within the metahistorical context which assumes her holiness) is essential to the dynamic logic of the narrative, since these concepts enable it to fulfil its function as an explanatory discursive tool engaged in the configuration of the "natural" -- a concept which requires that epistemological categories be established and maintained and which must interpret that which lies beyond their limits only in terms which support its own certain efficacy. The application of notions of the unnatural and the supernatural to Joan's story represents a first crucial step towards the epistemological, ideological, and aesthetic containment of her liminal or transgressive identity within the formal structures of its narrative reinvention. The imaginative text neutralizes the disruptive capacity of the Joan figure by positioning it at a remove from the textual construction of the "natural" -- that is to say, the

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[1] Baudrillard, 1995, p.148.

text confirms categorical constructs as natural by designating that which plunges them into crisis as unnatural on the one hand and as supernatural on the other. The transgressive, ambiguous nature of the Joan figure is thereby translated both as a perversion or deviance (unnatural) and as divinely-inspired (supernatural).

Caught up in the wide epistemological net with which the concepts of the unnatural and the supernatural surround and enmesh it, the transgressive Joan figure is subjected to further, more precisely targetted disciplinary narrative procedures. It can be engaged with both as an enemy (of society, within the historical context and interior narrative of the trial from which the metahistorical narrative distances itself) and as an ideal of a very particular kind (at the level of metahistory, wherein her saintliness is prescribed[1]). The transgressive aspects of the Joan figure are recast through conceptual extensions of the categories which they defy in order that their meaning may be redefined and specified, brought to account, assimilated or destroyed. The outlaw is condemned and punished through the reconstruction of her trial and death and, through the metahistory which upholds her canonisation, she is rendered exceptional in order to prove the rule.

Every imaginative reiteration of Joan's story strives to pin her down, to locate and identify her essence and meaning, to make her stand for this or for that, to confine her to a single, unambiguous position in relation to the conflicts enacted within her drama. Her transgressiveness is given concrete expression (in her clothes, her words, actions, and gestures) and is engaged with on the terms of the concrete through the pronouncements and actions of her prosecutors. A number of strategies of containment are worked into the narrative variants of Joan's story, expressed through the interplay and discursive logics of history, invention, and metahistory. These break down, broadly, as follows:

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[1] Joan was canonized in 1920, but her 'saintliness' was firmly established in the French imagination long before this date. Already a holy legend in her own lifetime, her reputation and popularity amongst her countrymen were inevitably heightened after her death; her rehabilitation trial in 1456 is testament to her growing status and a number of Johannic cults developed at places associated with her. In 1803, her status as a national heroine was such that Napoleon Bonaparte, seeking to strengthen French national unity, instituted 8 May as her official feast day. Championed by *Monsignor* Dupanloup and his supporters, the campaign for Joan's canonization resulted in her case being presented to the Vatican in 1869.

1. The logic of the trial which maintains that Joan can be forced to abandon, reject, or deny that which constitutes her transgressiveness and which aims towards a resolution in which she resumes woman's dress and performs conventional femininity.

2. The logic of the trial which accommodates an alternative resolution which permits Joan to be punished and destroyed and which prescribes her imprisonment and death at the stake.

3. The logic of the imaginative historical narrative which interprets and reconfigures Joan's transgressiveness in ways which apparently confirm and complement the ideological construction of the natural and in which the transgressive Joan figure functions as an analogue signifying what is *not* natural in a manner which confirms notions of the natural (Joan as heretic and Joan as saint).

4. The logic of the metahistory, in which Joan's identity and actions are abstracted from history in such a way as to render her transgressions meaningless. Here, Joan's earthly transgressions are held to be insignificant and only the movements of her soul and the notion of her holiness have consequence.

The logic of Joan's trial is simple and unambiguous; only that which confirms to categorical definition is understood as natural; therefore Joan must be unnatural, a creature existing outside the laws of both man and God, a thing of the Devil, a product, signifier, and producer of the darkness and chaos that exists outside human ordering. In Shaw's *Saint Joan*, d'Estivet sums up the reasons for her prosecution and punishment:

> "First, she has intercourse with evil spirits, and is therefore a sorceress. Second, she wears man's clothes, which is indecent, unnatural, and abominable, and in spite of our most earnest remonstrances and entreaties, she will not change them even to receive the sacrament."[1]

Joan confounds expectations at the levels of both the spiritual and the corporeal; there is no language which can adequately describe her beyond that which designates her as "unnatural." Her male dress -- the most tangible aspect of her strangeness and estrangement

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[1] Shaw, 1946, VI: 158-9.

-- becomes the site upon which is focused the struggle to compel her to comply with ordinary definitions. Joan's trial and prosecutors are overwhelmingly concerned with maintaining the consistency of form as it is described within and by patriarchal order; what matters is not so much who or what Joan "really" is but rather whether or not she can be compelled publicly to assume the identity prescribed for her as a woman. The goal of the judges mirrors the mimesis intrinsic to the act of transvestism itself and employs much the same logic; if male dress marks Joan's transgression of gender boundaries, then female dress will place her back within their limits. In this sense, form is held to be of far greater significance and import than is its content. If Joan can be persuaded or compelled to "perform" conventional womanhood and to publicly acknowledge that she has acted wrongly, then that is enough; the apparent synonymity of culturally constructed gender and biologically determined sex will be restored and the disciplinary process will have triumphed. In Anouilh's *The Lark*, the Promoter expresses the aim of the trial to Joan in the form of an ultimatum: "You will give up this dress altogether, or you will be condemned as a witch and burnt!"[1]

Perhaps the most straightforward discursive method of countering Joan's transgressiveness is to simply subordinate it to orthodox constructions of gender. Joan remains a "woman in armour" (anything else simply would not be Joan) but her femininity is emphasised and her cross-dressing is downplayed. In Méliès quaintly romantic and naive 1898 film version of her story, a long-haired and feminine Joan rides into battle wearing armour on the upper half of her body and long, loose skirts on the lower half. The battle scene itself is suggested rather than enacted -- figures dash about as a few bricks and handfuls of dust are thrown into the scene from an off-screen source. The light-hearted and exaggerated theatricality of the scene in no way requires Joan (or anyone else, for that matter) to "be" a soldier and so does not draw attention to the tangible impracticality of her dress. Here Joan is a heroine of a kind familiar in children's fairy-tale books -- sweet, feminine, utterly unthreatening. In Cecil B. De Mille's 1917 film, *Joan the Woman*, Joan is also feminized; Geraldine Farrar's hair is soft and wavy, she wears heavy make-up, her

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[1] Anouilh, 1990, II: 86.

physique is broad-beamed and curvaceous rather than strong and athletic and, as has already been remarked, she wears a skirt of sorts over the top of her armour (see Figure 5, p.145). Although she plays a rather more active role than does Méliès' Joan, her physical presence in battle is that of a figurehead rather than of a captain-of-war; she is always a symbol of virtue and righteousness, never an active participant in the enforcement of that which she represents. Her function, as well as her costume, reflects and upholds orthodox notions of femininity.

Victor Fleming's *Joan of Arc* also heavily emphasises Joan's feminity in order to render her transvestism less contrary to gender conventions. Ingrid Bergman (in any case an actress of unambiguous femininity) wears a suit of silver armour which is moulded to follow the rounded contours of her body, emphasising her hips and breasts. Her hair is cut short but is soft and loose rather than mannish; her face is made-up to look natural -- fresh, young, scrubbed, and wholesome, in line with the popular image of Joan as a virtuous maid from the countryside. As in De Mille's film, Joan of Arc serves her country as a spiritual figurehead rather than as a military leader. At the French army encampment outside Orléans, she willingly concedes to her captains' demands that she will not interfere with their tactical plans for an assault on the city. In the matter of her soldiers' conduct and morale, however, she plays a more assertive and active role; in defiance of her captains' objections, she prepares the French troops for battle by firmly expressing delicately "feminine" concerns about their rowdy male behaviour. She proves resolute where spiritual and ethical matters are concerned, but her talent for leadership is restricted to those areas where female authority has traditionally held sway -- that is, to the enforcement of civilised conduct among brutalized men. Traditional masculine and feminine competencies are thereby upheld. In the thick of battle, Joan is on the frontline but she brandishes not a sword but a white banner held high for all to see as she exhorts her soldiers to victory; her role is that of mascot and moral conscience rather than that of a comrade or a leader. Confronted by the bloody reality of war, she sheds tears both for her own fallen men and for their English enemies; when, rather than surrender to her, the English captain Glasdale chooses to plunge into the flames which are

Figure 5. Geraldine Farrar in Cecil B. De Mille's *Joan the Woman* (1917).

(BFI Stills, Posters, and Designs)

consuming the stronghold, Joan flinches from the spectacle of his suicide. Her bitter remark that "Death by fire is a horrible thing" signals her womanly sensitivity and compassion and, at the same time, serves as a reminder of the fate that Joan herself is destined to suffer. At the moment of her greatest military triumph, the apogee of her gender transgression, the terrible death which awaits her is invoked as a reminder of the price that she eventually must pay for her success in the masculine sphere of warfare. Joan's life is a warning as well as an example to other women; female virtue is rewarded in heaven, but ambitious earthly success has fatal consequences.

Maxwell Anderson's play *Joan of Lorraine*, upon which Fleming's film is based, betrays a tangible anxiety about the usurpation of the male that Joan's career represents. The natural superiority of men and of masculinity is reiterated throughout the play; "I am only a girl," Joan tells Saint Margaret, "I know nothing of arms or horsemanship or the speech of kings and high places."[1] Joan is extraordinary, the play suggests, not only because she overcomes the social subjectivity of women but also because she transcends femaleness itself, which is represented as an innately inferior state of being. By emphasising Joan's exceptionality, the play seeks to confirm and uphold the rules which determine its reactionary construction of gender; no *woman* could possibly do what Joan does if it were not for the intervention of the supernatural which bestows almost magical powers upon her. The 'natural' inferiority of women is clearly articulated in a conversation between Joan and her two brothers, Jean and Pierre:

> *Jean.* I don't think any girl could manage it. Not even a princess.
> *Pierre.* No. It's not girl's work.
> *Joan.* Do you think it's boy's work?
> *Pierre.* I'd say it was for a man. But a boy would certainly do better at it than a girl.
> [*He sits to pet the lamb.*]
> *Jean.* He could ride, for one thing, and he'd be strong enough to lift an axe or a lance.
> *Pierre.* He could go among men without being followed about and shouted at, or maybe pinched behind.

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[1] Anderson, 1950, I: 16.

> *Jean.* He could give commands, too. He'd know how to speak to soldiers and courtiers.[1]

Here, femaleness is constructed as inherently problematic on a number of levels. Joan's class transgression is dismissed in just four words; her lowly social status is of infinitely less account than is her gender, since "not even a princess" could carry out the masculine tasks that her voices require her to perform. In the sphere of action, then, even the most powerful and privileged of women is of less worth and consequence than an ordinary man or boy. A boy would be physically strong and competent, immune from the sexual aggression that women must face as a matter of course, and he would have leadership qualities arising from a natural masculine aptitude for ordering people around. Women, by implication, are restricted by a combination of socio-sexual subjectivity, physical weakness and ineptitude, and an inborn passivity which designates them as natural followers rather than as natural leaders. In the wake of this conversation, Joan's gender transgression becomes an act of yearning and of envy which serves to confirm the superiority of maleness by apparently expressing Joan's desire to emulate masculinity and to become a boy or man. There is a markedly Freudian suggestion of "penis envy" in Joan's words:

> "You almost make me believe -- a boy could do it. Or a man.....Oh, if I could speak large and round like a boy, and could stand that way and make my words sound out like a trumpet, -- if I could do that I could do all the things God wants me to. But I'm a girl, and my voice is a girl's voice, and my ways are a girl's ways. If only I were a man! If only I could shout like a man! But that wouldn't help either, for it wouldn't fit with the prophecy."[2]

Joan's subsequent achievements are thereby wholly divorced from her gendered identity; her successes are entirely the result of her faith, her virtuousness, and of supernatural intervention. In her femaleness there is only weakness; her whole career is interpreted as a homage to masculinity that is made possible only through divine agency, as the fulfilment of

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[1] Anderson, 1950, I: 20-21.
[2] *Ibid.*, I: 21.

a prophecy that a maid from Lorraine will save France. It is Joan's voices and visions, her angelic visitations, which make her extraordinary and which allow her extraordinariness, tangibly expressed in her gender transgression, to be configured in such a way as to uphold rather than undermine gender orthodoxies. Because Anderson's Joan serves to demonstrate female weakness, her achievements seem all the more holy in their inspiration and remarkable in their realization. A neat equation of mutuality is in operation; the invocation of the supernatural confirms gender conventions, which in turn serve to evidence and reinforce the supernatural dimension of Joan of Arc's story. A mere woman could not successfully perform masculine activities unless she had the help of God; because Joan is only a woman and yet is successful in the masculine sphere, she *must* have had God on her side.

Perhaps surprisingly, Joan's femininity is only rarely emphasised to such an extent. More often, the subversive implications of her cross-dressing are downplayed by means of simple, reasoned explanations – though, again, such explanations both depend upon and confirm orthodox notions about masculinity and femininity. In Shaw's *Saint Joan*, Ladvenu questions her directly on the subject of her male dress and Joan replies as if few things could be less important or more obvious:

> ".....what can be plainer commonsense? I was a soldier living among soldiers. I am a prisoner guarded by soldiers. If I were to dress as a woman they would think of me as a woman, and then what would become of me? If I dress as a soldier they think of me as a soldier, and I can live with them as I do at home with my brothers."[1]

Here, Joan's transvestism does not run counter to her virtuous womanhood but rather serves to protect it from the sexual predatoriness of men. Disorderliness is displaced from Joan onto the soldiers and her male dress no longer remarks her independence but rather signals her female subjectivity. Anouilh's play uses much the same technique as Joan justifies her cross-dressing to Cauchon by stressing her need to guard her virginity:

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[1] Shaw, 1946, VI: 160.

> "Ever since I was captured, my lord, each night, and when you send me back there in the evening, it begins again.....each night seems longer, and the soldiers are strong and full of tricks. I should as soon wear a woman's dress on the battlefield."[1]

When Cauchon promises her that he will deal with the soldiers, Joan meekly promises that she will resume "the dress of a girl."[2] Her cross-dressing becomes nothing more than a temporary expediency adopted not in order to usurp masculine privilege but rather in order to protect vulnerable and virtuous femininity from men. Far from challenging notions of gender, Joan's transvestism functions in these instances to confirm them in their most extreme and explicit form; she wears man's clothes because femaleness is innately a state of subjection, and she does so in order to conceal her sexuality so that it presents no temptation to men. Through such constructions, her transvestism is represented as an act of performative aggression against the notion of femaleness rather than as a challenge to notions of maleness and of masculine superiority.

In Marc de Gastyne's film *La Merveilleuse Vie de Jeanne d'Arc*, Joan's resumption of male dress, after she has submitted to the Church, is explained away expressly as a consequence of her subject status. As she sleeps, after having signed the confession, two English soldiers sneak into her cell and remove the woman's clothing that she has agreed to wear in order to save herself from the stake. In its place, they leave only the male dress that she has been forced to discard. The soldiers watch through a window as she wakes, realizes what they have done to her, but nevertheless must dress herself in her tunic and leggings since she has nothing else to wear.[3] As soon as she has done so, the soldiers hurry away to inform Bishop Cauchon that Joan has reneged on her promise. The priests file solemnly into Joan's cell. She pleads with them, telling them that the guards must have switched her clothing while she was sleeping, but Cauchon pays no heed to her attempts to explain

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[1] Anouilh, 1990, II: 87.
[2] *Ibid.*, II: 88.
[3] This version of events originates in Joan's rehabilitation trial in 1456, where it was related by a number of witnesses. However, their testimony is not supported by the documentation of her trial of condemnation and is generally thought to reflect the second trial's purpose as a vindication of Joan. See Warner, 1991, pp141-144.

herself. In the end, Joan goes to her death not in order to maintain her own integrity but because she has been tricked and manipulated into her fate. Her resumption of male dress is not an action that she has made of her own volition; it is a *reaction*, emptied of any ethical motivation. Joan's male enemies have at last outwitted and outmanouevred her and her death at the stake, far from being the tragic conclusion of her own ethically-determined actions, is merely the pathetic end of one who has surrendered to her enemies only to become their passive victim.

Such explanations substantially reduce the subversive implications of Joan's cross-dressing, but at the same time they also alter and weaken her status as a tragic subject; stripped of this last and greatest gesture of nobility and personal integrity, performed in the face of overwhelming adversity, Joan ceases to be a truly tragic hero and at last becomes merely a victim. She is made to conform to the familiar construct of woman-as-victim. Her fate no longer inspires respect and compassion but only pity for her in her impossible plight. Nevertheless, Joan's transgressiveness is essential to the logic of her drama and the explanations presented in order to annul it inevitably fail to account satisfactorily for its pervasive, unavoidable presence or successfully to annul its subversive implications. In *The Lark*, Jean Anouilh grasps the fact that the ambiguities represented by Joan have a resonance far beyond their expression in her clothing. Joan offers the usual explanation for her dress to the Promoter: "I had to ride horseback with the soldiers. I had to wear what they wear so that they wouldn't think of me as a girl, but as a soldier like themselves." But the Promoter sees beyond the mere fact of her clothing and responds angrily: "A worthless reply! A girl who isn't damned to begin with wouldn't wish to ride with soldiers!" Joan's actions remain outside the parameters of the justification she gives for her male dress; they can be explained only in terms of the unnatural and the supernatural.

In Shaw's play, Joan's transvestism similarly remains problematic despite the practical explanations proffered for it. In his Preface, Shaw enthuses about "unwomanly women" like George Sand and Rosa Bonheur[1] and goes on to state that,

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[1] Shaw, 1946, Preface: 27.

"The exemption of women from military service is founded, not on any natural inaptitude that men do not share, but on the fact that communities cannot reproduce themselves without plenty of women. Men are largely dispensable, and are sacrificed accordingly."[1]

Shaw's rejection of masculine superiority, and his startling assertion of the virtual social redundancy of men, is typically radical and sweeping, but in the play itself it turns out that the main thrust of Shaw's gender argument is his idea that women are capable of being excellent men provided they reject and abandon their femininity. In *Saint Joan*, Shaw presents a vision of a common humanity which is entirely composed of a concept of masculinity to which certain exceptional women are also admitted; the notion of maleness is simply extended to admit and embrace the masculine woman. With her thigh-slapping laddishness and blunt, often absurdly rustic speech, Joan is represented as a burlesque version of a certain type of rough-and-ready maleness; she becomes "one of the boys" and, in the process, loses almost all of her female identity. In Scene II, her encounter with the Duchess de la Trémoille -- who is the only other female character in the play -- establishes Joan's honorary maleness at the Duchess's expense. Joan is kneeling at the Archbishop's feet, fervently kissing the hem of his gown and, when he leaves, she remains kneeling where she is -- obstructing the path of the Duchess:

> THE DUCHESS [*coldly*] Will you allow me to pass please?
> JOAN [*hastily rising, and standing back*] Beg pardon, ma'am, I am sure.
> *The Duchess passes on. Joan stares after her; then whispers to the Dauphin.*
> JOAN. Be that Queen?
> CHARLES. No. She thinks she is.
> JOAN [*again staring after the Duchess*] Oo-oo-ooh! [*Her awestruck amazement at the figure cut by the magnificently dressed lady is not wholly complimentary*].[2]

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[1] Shaw, 1946, Preface: 27-28.
[2] *Ibid.*, II: 99-100.

Here, Joan's "masculinity" is used against women and, specifically, to mock and deflate female self-importance in order to oppose orthodox femininity. The description of the Duchess's magnificent dress is in clear contrast to Joan's plain and practical masculine attire, and Joan sides with men (here represented by the Dauphin) against the frivolousness and vanity of the feminine. In Shaw's play, almost every suggestion of Joan's femaleness is eradicated. In Scene V, in a rare moment of tenderness, Joan affectionately remarks to Dunois that she wishes he were a baby so that she could nurse him for a while. This aside immediately becomes the ground for a further, explicit rejection of womanhood. "You are a bit of a woman after all," Dunois teases her. Joan responds with an indignant denial: "No: not a bit. I am a soldier and nothing else. Soldiers always nurse children when they get a chance."[1] Implicit in this exchange is an assumption that masculine and feminine competencies are inherently incompatible and that Joan therefore cannot be *both* a soldier *and* a woman.

For the critic Margery M. Morgan, Shaw's Joan is a creature above and beyond the politics of gender. Morgan refuses the possibility of any feminist interpretation or appropriation of Shaw's heroine while, at the same time, suggesting that Joan's transgressiveness is the result of her deviant sexuality:

> "Joan contains too much that is redolent of the popular stage and indicative of the sturdy peasant for the neurotic associations of the New Woman to corrode her image, though play and Preface accept the likelihood that the historical soldier-girl's mission was fired to some extent by abnormal sexuality."[2]

Joan's achievements are credited to her "abnormal sexuality" and, so the logic of Morgan's argument runs, therefore cannot be used to justify the liberation of (heterosexual) women. Morgan's analysis points to and reinforces the disavowal of the feminine in Shaw's play. Despite the enthusiasm for feminine genius and for female emancipation that Shaw

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[1] Shaw, 1946, V: 129.
[2] Morgan, 1972, pp254-255.

expresses in his Preface, the play itself disallows the ambiguities inherent to Joan's transgressiveness by entirely absorbing her into the sphere of the masculine and then restricting her within its parameters. The binaric opposition of male and female thus remains intact; certainly, Joan can be whichever gender she chooses (and is suited) to be, biological sex notwithstanding, but she must be either one or the other and cannot be both. The fluid, category-confounding, ambiguities of androgyny are denied her as she is recast in the image of the male. She must reject and relinquish every aspect and suggestion of femininity so that she becomes a man in every sense but the biological. Thus, Shaw's play refuses any significant blurring of gender categories and merely proffers a dressed-up version of the same old oppositions; the notion of Joan's femaleness is rejected altogether, rather than extended to include some of the behaviours and abilities conventionally associated with men. In the final analysis, it is femininity, not masculinity, which Shaw's play questions, criticises, and rejects through its reconstruction of Joan of Arc.

Nevertheless, Joan's transgressiveness remains troublesome; the fact that she is a woman is undeniable and, no matter how her femaleness is reconfigured and diminished, she always remains a woman who has colonised masculinity for her own purposes and trumped the male in his own game. Shaw's Epilogue acknowledges the problems implicit to the disruption of category occasioned by the Joan figure and attempts to resolve them by removing Joan from the historical plane altogether and reinstating her as a metaphysical presence. No matter how sympathetic we are to her, the Epilogue suggests, while she remained alive she remained a heretic and a threat to the social order. Dead, she can safely represent an ideal to which others should aspire -- following the example of her faith and integrity rather than of her transgressiveness. The more elevated her posthumous status, the more exceptional she seems to be; her living actions are abstracted to a series of grand ethical gestures and her living, social identity is recast as a remote, spectral grace. The ultimate ideological neutralization and appropriation of her transgressiveness is achieved precisely through this emphasis upon her *exceptionality*. Saint Joan is not bound by the same laws which govern ordinary humanity and ordinary womanhood; she is unique, the Daughter

of God, one of the chosen few, a thing apart. Thus, the narrative reconfigures her transgressiveness in a manner which allows the notion of the 'naturalness' of disciplinary categories to be maintained. Alive, at the level of history, Joan is unnatural. Dead, at the level of metahistory, she becomes supernatural. Either way, she no longer challenges the construction of the natural because she is relocated entirely outside its boundaries.

CHAPTER SEVEN

IMITATIO CHRISTI: SEX, DEATH, AND TRANSCENDENCE

At the end of her story, Joan of Arc dies. It is an unassailable fact of her history, and it is the nature and moment of her death which gives the narrative of her history's reiteration a logic which is strongly suggestive of tragedy. Having risen from nowhere, claiming divine inspiration and guidance, to save France from the English, Joan is at last called to account by the earthly powers she has offended. Her story ends, as it must, with the auto-da-fé. Without the tragic force and dramatic suggestiveness of this violent conclusion, she would surely today be little more than a peculiar footnote to the history of late-medieval France. The tragic imagination requires an act of meaningful finality both as an absolute and as an absolution; it is the inevitability of the willed self-sacrifice towards which Joan's drama works which enriches her story with the intensity and coherence of a determining passion and the cold thematic purity of fidelity to an inner light. The ethical import of her life is dramatically realized in the eloquence of her death. "The martyr's death seems necessary to sanctify even the noblest cause," notes Francis Gies. "Without it, patriotism is worthy of admiration, but with it, in Yeats's words, referring to martyrs in another struggle for liberation, 'a terrible beauty is born.'"[1]

Whether she is understood to have died for her country, for her faith, or to maintain her own integrity, Joan's death seals her ethical identity intact and forever; it ensures that what she stands for can never be adulterated by doubts, corroded by the mellowing effects of age and experience, compromised by any subsequent betrayal of the essential substance of her youthful, idealistic self. Though the imaginative interpretations of her life are many and varied, none of their creators has invented an alternative ending to her story in which she

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[1] Francis Gies, *Joan of Arc: the Legend and the Reality* (New York: Harper and Row,1981), p.260.

survives her fate.[1] Only Schiller radically rewrites her death; in his play *Die Jungfrau von Orleans*, he downplays her status as a martyr in order to recast her as a romantic heroine, and fabricates her death in battle. Nevertheless, Schiller's Joan still dies -- and still dies heroically -- before time can change her. Joan in old age, her heroic stance weakened and diluted by the myriad contemplations of some imaginatively-constructed future self, is an unthinkable appendix to her career. She is consumed by fire not just in the cause of fidelity to the historical script but also because the dramatic logic of her story demands such a conclusion. "Such completion is built into our aesthetic response," observes Marina Warner, "so that even when God has been banished from the picture, when Joan's martyrdom is not seen in theological terms as adding to the store of grace, it is seen to add to the sum of beauty in the world."[2]

As Warner's remark suggests, the manner of Joan's death has two consequential and interrelated dramatic modes -- the tragic and the theological. As a tragic conclusion, its formulation entails -- as we have already seen in Chapter Two of this study -- a narrative emphasis upon the ethical conflicts suggested by her history. Her acceptance of her fate is cast as the last grand, heroic gesture of an individual whose ethically motivated actions have brought about her own destruction. Joan goes to the stake because her integrity precludes the only other option which remains open to her; she chooses to die rather than betray her inner light. In its tragic configuration such a closure is primarily brought about by human agency. Its supernatural element is configured as the tragic dynamic of ethical compulsion; it is brought about by Joan's personal beliefs and ethically-inspired actions rather than by any certain, exteriorised evidence of a divine presence in her life. The governance of the individual's will is prioritised; Joan's voices speak to her as a species of inner conscience, as the externalised expression of an interior compulsion. "They come from your imagination,"

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[1] This is true of fictional representations, but fact is much stranger. Five years after her death, Joan's brothers appeared at Orléans with a woman whom they claimed was Joan. For several years, 'Joan' and her comrades travelled around France, profiting from the goodwill and generosity of the French people until, in 1440, 'Joan' was revealed to be another female soldier, known as Claude des Armoises. The involvement of Joan's brothers in this lucrative scam was apparently entirely mercenary. See Warner, 1992, pp187-188.

[2] Warner, 1992, p.268.

Robert de Baudricourt tells her in Shaw's *Saint Joan*, and Joan wholeheartedly agrees with him: "Of course. That is how the messages of God come to us."[1] Joan's faith in God implicates not God Himself in the form of a *deus ex machina* but rather her own spiritual wilfulness, which sets her against the authority of the Church; her destiny unfolds not by divine ordinance but as the realization and consequence of her own willed actions. Though the religious dimensions of Joan's story are always and inevitably implicated in its tragic formulation, they are interpreted through and in terms of the dialectical structures and ethical concerns of the tragic drama.

In common usage, the term "martyr" is used to refer to any individual who lays down his life for a cause. Strictly speaking, however, the concept of martyrdom belongs to theology. The principle difference between the figures of the tragic hero and the martyr arises out of the religious sensibility which remarks the martyr as a particular type of tragic hero. The Christian martyr is blessed with an overarching faith in the Almighty and, unlike the ordinary tragic hero, his stance is not the defiant gesture of one who confronts oblivion but that of the believer who knows that a better place awaits him after his death. The ideals which drive the more conventional type of tragic hero towards his downfall are not those of religious faith and he does not go to his death secure in the belief that the fields of paradise await the arrival of his immortal soul. But he is martyred none the less, nailed upon the cross of his own ethical make-up and integrity.

The differences, such as they are, between these two conceptual modes of meaningful and fatal individual action are to be found in the interior details of personal belief and motivation, in the particular nature of the conscience which drives the individual towards his doom. From the start, martyrdom usually -- though not always -- implies an inner certainty and a perfect acceptance of fate of a degree that the flawed, and more emphatically human, tragic hero seldom achieves; the tragic hero seeks to make his life meaningful and finds he can do so only by dying, while the martyr surrenders his life in the firm belief that it is the afterlife which is of greater consequence. The martyr's domain is that of the Immanent, and

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[1] Shaw, 1946, I: 81.

the term "martyrdom" itself proclaims a righteous faith that finds confirmation in the world beyond the protagonist and which extends onto the plane of metaphysics; the martyr dies for a cause that also has a presence and a momentum that exists independently of him. But tragedy is not without its own metaphysical inspiration and logic; as Louis L. Martz observes, it "seems to demand both the human sufferer and the secret cause.....It is an affirmation even though the cause is destructive in its immediate effects: for this cause seems to affirm the existence of some universal order of things."[1] The tragic hero's acceptance of his fate, the dedication to a "universal order" that is avowed by his refusal to compromise his ideals in the name of expediency, requires a sense of higher meaning and a leap of faith which differs from the martyr's in its inspiration and metaphysical *context* rather than in its determining substance. The martyr is not an alternative to the tragic hero; rather, he is a particular *type* of tragic hero. Joan of Arc is clearly both; her story possesses both a religious and an ethical logic, a theological and a tragic dimension. Certainly, Joan dies for her Christian faith, but it is for her own version that faith -- a version which sets her against the orthodoxy of the Church Militant. In Dreyer's *The Passion of Joan of Arc* Joan, by realizing the essential truth of her own being and accepting its fatal consequences, reclaims her death from her persecutors and transforms its meaning; it becomes the defiant, last gesture of her ethical integrity, a final and unanswerable assertion of all that has made her life meaningful. We do not need to share her religious faith to comprehend the tragic import of her death. "Jeanne's God may not exist....." writes David Bordwell, "But whether Jeanne's last cry of 'Jesus' echoes across an empty cosmos or not, the human purpose of her mission has been accomplished."[2]

The whole of the Christian faith is centred upon the notion of Christ's martyrdom and, in its theological aspect, the tragic narrative of Joan's history has been developed in such a way that its keypoints and overall structure echo and parallel the myth of Christ. The similarities are many and marked; Jules Michelet acknowledged and reiterated them by dividing his historical biography of Joan into chapters whose headings clearly follow the general schema

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[1] Louis L. Martz, "The Saint as Tragic Hero," in Brooks (ed.), 1966, p.153.
[2] Bordwell, 1973, p.68.

of Christ's story -- "Childhood and Vocation of Joan," "Joan Betrayed and Surrendered," "The Trial," "The Temptation," and "Joan's Death."[1] Like Christ's, Joan's early life is represented as one of relative obscurity. According to the historical record, her background was in fact petit bourgeois rather than peasant, but in its fictive interpretation her home-life becomes exaggeratedly poor and humble and, despite her own evidence to the contrary at her condemnation trial, the popular image of the child Joan as a shepherdess remains firmly engraved upon the cultural imagination. It is an image which itself suggests Christ in his familiar role as the Good Shepherd, guarding his flock, and which feeds into the emphasis upon poverty and humility that is central to the doctrines of Christianity; both Christ and Joan emerge as if from nowhere to bring salvation to their people, each possessing no more and no less than their own spiritual authority. It is essential to their roles as spiritual figureheads that their leadership seems to owe nothing to earthly power; they possess neither material wealth nor socio-political status, and they rise to greatness through a combination of divine ordinance, charisma, integrity, virtuousness, and their own efforts. Both figures are mythically constructed as heroes of the people and, as such, an unwritten rule dictates that they must be seen to emerge from the people.

Both Christ and Joan claim divine guidance -- though Christ's claims are significantly more ambitious as, unlike Joan, he pronounces himself God Incarnate. Like Christ, Joan is credited with miraculous powers and miraculous episodes are included in most twentieth century versions of her story, despite the century's cynicism towards such events. Shaw's Joan causes Robert de Baudricourt's hens first to stop laying altogether and then to produce a glut of eggs; later, she changes the direction of wind at Orléans. Dellanoy's *Fémina* film-sketch, *Jeanne*, gives Joan power over life and death; its narrative focuses upon her reluctant performance of a miracle wherein she resurrects a dead baby for just long enough for it to be baptised -- an incident which is mentioned in the transcripts of Joan's trial[2] and which strongly recalls Christ's resurrection of Lazarus. In Victor Fleming's *Joan of Arc*, Joan

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[1] Jules Michelet, *Joan of Arc*, trans Albert Guérard, (Michigan: University of Michigan Press, Ann Arbor, 1993). First published 1841.
[2] See Barrett, 1931, p.89.

convinces Robert de Baudricourt to back her mission by giving him news of a lost battle days before the official messenger arrives; later, she foresees the death of one of her soldiers, and performs her trademark miracle of demonstrating her authority over the wind.

Other parallels abound throughout the mythic interpretation of Joan's history; as with Christ, great emphasis is placed upon her chastity as evidence of her holy purity and spiritual otherness. Both figures are eventually betrayed by their former allies and associates. Judas Iscariot gives away Christ to the Romans in exchange for gold, and the other disciples rapidly abandon their leader rather than risk sharing his fate. Joan too is sold out to her enemies -- first by King Charles, who accepts English gold in exchange for a treaty and leaves Joan and her army alone to face defeat at Paris, and later by her captor John of Ligny, who sells her to the Duke of Burgundy who, in turn, sells her to Pierre Cauchon and his English allies. The greed and corruption of her captors offsets Joan's purity of thought and deed, her Christlike disregard for riches and power. The very mechanics of her unfolding fate bear a moral inscription. Of her erstwhile comrades and supporters -- Dunois, La Hire, d'Alençon, Gilles de Rais, and the king who owes his throne to her -- not one makes any attempt to rescue her. On the eve of her destruction, Joan, like Christ, suffers a brief lapse of spiritual resolve and must overcome her fears and despair in order to reassert the truth of her own being and fulfil her destiny. Also like Christ, she is at last reconciled to her fate and dies at the hands of the representatives of the State and of the religious institution whose authority she has challenged and undermined.

In Dreyer's *The Passion of Joan of Arc*, the analogy with Christ is explicit. Even the title of the film invites comparison between Joan's suffering and Christ's passion. Throughout the film, the *leitmotif* of the cross is employed in order to symbolically associate Joan with Christ. The crossed bars of the window in Joan's cell frequently occupy the centre of frames in which she is also present and, as we have already seen, in one moving and portentous scene they cast a cross of sunlight and shadow across the floor. Later, in the scene in the torture chamber, two crossed planks, propped up against a wall in the background, share the frame with Joan as she is escorted into the room. When she signs the recantation she adds, after

her name and entirely of her own volition, a crudely drawn cross.[1] As she goes to her death, Massieu gives her a cross which she clasps to her breast (see Figure 6, p.162); the executioner has to take it from her grasp so that he can bind her to the stake. The same sequence is broken by cuts to shots of pigeons descending to settle about the cross atop a nearby church; as Joan is tied to the stake, the pigeons leave the cross and scatter upwards into the sky. Then, as Joan burns, the cowled Massieu holds up a cross for her to see above the turmoil of smoke as the crowded scene around her pyre breaks up into a riot. Finally, the film ends with a shot of the empty stake and, in the bottom corner of the frame, the church cross. With this closing image, the film elevates the stake to the iconic status of the cross, unequivocally asserting the identification of Joan with Christ at the level of the symbolic and the mythic.

However, for all that persuasive correlations emerge between these two myths of faith, there are also crucial differences between them. Where Joan's story is fractured and fluid with uncertainties and ambiguities, Christ's is related through the rhetoric of doctrinal certainty. Its formulations and assumptions admit no doubts about Christ's identity and meaning. He is a man, he is the Son of God, the Messiah, he dies for mankind's sins, and he rises from the dead in emphatic demonstration of both his own divinity and his promise to mankind of redemption and eternal life. Other important differences are evident in the purpose and nature of their respective missions. Christ's mission on earth is to preach and to teach, to offer hope of salvation, and to give mankind the example of his sacrifice; he is the *Logos*, the Word of God made flesh. In Pier Paolo Pasolini's *The Gospel According to St. Matthew* (1964), the utterance of Christ literally shakes the world; nailed upon the cross, he lets forth a roar of fury and anguish that rends the hills beyond Golgotha like an earthquake. Joan of Arc's voice can have no such impact; her myth neither suggests nor lends itself to such metaphors. The Christ of the Gospels offers humanity a clearly articulated code of social behaviour, a system of belief, a doctrine to live by, but Joan has no such agenda; her

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[1] Joan's addition of the cross as a postscript to her signature is doubly significant here, since the historical record reveals that the real Joan used the sign of the cross to mark fake messages, sent out to mislead the enemy, so that her own followers would recognise them as false -- a fact which Dreyer, painstaking researcher that he was, was almost certainly aware of.

Figure 6. Massieu (Antonin Artaud) gives Joan (Renée Falconetti) a cross to hold as she goes to the stake in Dreyer's *The Passion of Joan of Arc* (1928).

(BFI Stills, Posters, and Designs)

mission is one of action rather than of moral and spiritual rhetoric. Her faith is harnessed to, and expressed through, the specific and martial task of freeing France from its English enemies; in Carl Dreyer's film, far from embodying the Word, it is the Word which oppresses her. Though in herself Christlike, Dreyer's Joan is nevertheless persecuted and destroyed by the official interpreters of God's word. Beyond the example of her inspirational devotion to God, her much-lauded virginity, and her absolute dedication to her ideals, she offers humanity nothing in the way of a schematic creed. Neither can she return from the dead; although Shaw's *Saint Joan* and Roberto Rossellini's film *Giovanna d'Arco al Rogo* both resurrect her at the level of the metaphysical, such devices are the inventions of art overreaching history rather than a *bona fide* aspect of her myth.

The points at which the general narrative structure and substance of Joan's myth diverges significantly from that of Christ have important implications with regard to the uncertainties and variations apparent in its cultural reiteration, but these differences are nevertheless rooted in their conceptual similarities; that is to say, the differences are of consequence *because* her myth parallels that of Christ in so many respects. They implicate, once again, the relation between the concepts of transgression and transcendence, of the unnatural and the supernatural, which lies at the heart of each of their respective myths. Christ, as has already been said, is in one sense emphatically and unambiguously male; his biological sex is unquestionable and central to Christalogical tradition, with its patriarchal doctrines and institutions, its infamous and myriad misogynies. But this certainty about Christ's maleness is undermined by the gendered qualities which he embodies and represents. In a conceptual sense, the Christ figure is strikingly androgynous. The feminist historian Caroline Walker Bynum, writing about medieval notions of gender and Christianity, notes that many medieval theologians struggled with unanswerable questions related to Christ's gendered identity; since the Son of God, being without a human father, took his flesh entirely from woman, how could the proprietorial notion of his maleness be explained and sustained?[1] Furthermore, those qualities which Christ represented and exhorted his followers to emulate are in many

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[1] See Caroline Walker Bynum, "The Body of Christ in the Later Middle Ages," in Bynum, *Fragmentation and Redemption* (New York: Zone Books, 1992), pp79-117.

respects more resonant of orthodox constructions of femininity than they are of masculinity; Christ stands not for material power but for gentleness, passivity, humility, pacifism, nurturing, healing, love, piety, poverty, and so on -- in short, for a variety of qualities and characteristics that are elsewhere almost exclusively associated with women.

The "femininity" inherent in the composition of Christ's character and message is given concrete expression in the tradition of his representation. In his remarkable study of the Christ figure in Renaissance art, Leo Steinberg demonstrates the phallocentrism evident in many representations of Christ; paintings of the Infant Christ are often constructed in such a way as to draw attention to his tiny genitals, frequently with erect or semi-erect penis, while the genitalia of the adult Christ, though modestly concealed behind cloth, are nevertheless often prominently displayed through the contours of the fabic. For Steinberg, there is an obvious logic underlying this tradition, since "to profess that God once embodied himself in a human nature is to confess that the eternal, there and then, became mortal and sexual."[1] Christ's sexuality is stressed, then, in order to emphasise and fully realize his humanity. But, compelling though Steinberg's argument is, the evidence which he presents also suggests an alternative conclusion -- namely, that the artistic obsession with Christ's male sexuality is proprietorial in its inspiration in a manner which implicitly acknowledges the androgynous aspects and potential of its subject. Caroline Walker Bynum, responding to Steinberg's argument, points to a different artistic and textual strand[2] -- one in which Christ offers blood from the wound made by the centurion's spear much as a woman offers her breast to her child, and in which the Church is frequently depicted as a lactating mother. The details of the theological notions which gave rise to such images in the late Middle Ages do not concern us here except in as much as they acknowledge and evidence some of the conceptual problems inherent to the gendered embodying of an incorporeal, and therefore genderless, Godhead. The blurring of Christ's gender is marked and, although many and varied, the images of Christ which predominate in the west today, which are immediately recognisable even where

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[1] Leo Steinberg, *The Sexuality of Christ in Renaissance Art and in Modern Oblivion*, (London: Faber, 1984), p.13.

[2] Caroline Walker Bynum, "The Body of Christ in the Later Middle Ages" in Bynum, 1992, pp79-117.

other clues to the subject's identity are absent, commonly have a decidedly androgynous form. Christ is imagined with a slender body, frequently covered by a long, flowing gown; he is pictured with long hair, fine features, large gentle eyes, a sensual mouth, youth, and pale skin. Where he is portrayed naked, there is a marked absence of body hair; the beard that this Christ wears is in many respects the clearest indicator of his masculine virility -- which is, perhaps, one reason why he is so often portrayed as bearded.

The Christ figure is a site upon which a confusing mixture of gender signifiers converge; its construction represents the conceptualization of an ideal which entails the partial feminisation of the male and which directly opposes many of the attributes conventionally associated with masculinity -- material power, aggression and assertiveness, physical prowess, and so on. Compared with the muscular, virile, megalomaniacal, libidinous, and heroically promiscuous gods of the Greek and Roman pantheons whose worship preceded Christianity in Europe, Christ's masculinity is strange indeed. This tendency towards androgyny, or femininity, can be partly explained in terms of the Christian message, which demands submission to God's will, humility and obedience, and the surrender of material power. In this sense, the Christian message is profoundly radical; it proposes an ideal which entails the social emasculation of men by stripping them of their wealth and power, and which requires that men willingly assume a subject status in relation to the Church and to God which is similar to the social subjection of women. It opposes the classical notion of heroism, with its emphasis upon fantastical feats of derring-do, and instead proposes an alternative heroic model which is characterised by meekness and submissiveness rather than by aggressive resistance. The position of subjection that it demands has, for men, a crucial dimension of devotional sacrifice; to surrender worldly power (or the possibility of gaining worldly power) in the name of religion presupposes that one possesses (or at least may come to possess) worldly power in the first place, since one cannot give up what one does not have, nor sacrifice what one does not value. Women, generally having no such power, cannot make the same sacrifice, and thus it is that Christianity understands self-willed male

subjection as a virtue while, in contrast, treating female subjection as a fact of life which is in itself devoid of spiritual merit.

The mythic configuration of both the Christ and Joan figures is focused upon their respective martyrdoms. As an act of wilful destruction of human life, martyrdom is unique. It constitutes an execution, a legal murder, which is unusual and distinct in that the emphasis is clearly upon the *victim's* will and active participation rather than upon the murderer's. Firstly, unlike most other murders, it involves a strong element of collusion. The martyr goes knowingly and willingly to his death. Admittedly, this willingness is determined by adverse circumstances which leave little room for real choice, but it is willingness nonetheless; if it were not so, the execution would not and could not be a true martyrdom. Christ, knowing and fearful of the fate which awaits him, refuses to flee from the Garden of Gethsemene; Joan, having signed the confession which guarantees her survival, abjures and resumes her male dress in the certain knowledge that she will die as a result. The martyr, like the tragic hero, always has a choice of sorts; he can surrender to the authority which oppresses him, refute the ideals upon which he has acted, and buy back his life with that refutation. Or he can choose to uphold his ideals, to remain true to himself and his inner light, and thus can be said, in one sense at least, to have brought about his own death. "One life is all we have," says Maxwell Anderson's Joan, "and we live it as we believe in living it, and then it's gone. But to surrender what you are, and live without belief -- that's more terrible than dying -- more terrible than dying young."[1]

Secondly, the concept of martyrdom possesses a crucial dimension of surrender. Neither the martyr nor the tragic hero chooses the path that will lead him to death for its own sake but rather does so as an act of submission to an inner compulsion which, whether divinely inspired or not, he regards as being of greater worth than is his own life. The martyr's basic dilemma is the same as that which faces all tragic heroes. He gives up his life for that thing which makes his life meaningful and he does so in order to uphold that meaning. His death is not an ethical defeat -- though it is a circumstantial one -- but a final gesture which completes

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[1] Anderson, 1946, II: 127.

his life; he does not submit to his enemies as such but rather to his ethically-determined ideals, his faith, his God, the inner compulsion which possesses him and drives him towards his doom. Yet inherent in this act of submission and self-sacrifice there is a further suggestion of femininity; the martyr and the tragic hero both relinquish their autonomy to the higher authority of their conscience, their destiny, and/or their gods and, in doing so, they assume a position of subjection in relation to them.

The enactment and method of Christ's martyrdom further confuse the gendered concepts which converge upon his mythic person. Martyrdoms in general, and the crucifixion in particular, account for a disproportionate number of the relatively rare portrayals of prolonged male suffering in western culture; unlike the female body, the helpless, damaged male body is only occasionally represented in circumstances other than those of a martyrdom of one sort or another. The crucifixion employs a very particular ritual and imagery, one which entails the performance of a deliberated series of violences upon the male body. Christ's physical torment begins with the vicious crown of thorns, with the tearing and bloodying of his flesh in a coronation which cruelly parodies the secular ceremony which bestows earthly power upon the monarch; the title "King of the Jews" is a double irony written in blood. In Martin Scorsese's film *The Last Temptation of Christ* (1988), the sexualised, deathbound masculinity of Christ is explicit in the film's controversial theme of temptation and its equally controversial emphasis upon Christ's corporeality and flawed humanity. Suffering and a savage sexuality blur together in the scenes leading up to and relating the crucifixion. Prior to his last journey, Christ is stripped naked and flogged by his Roman guards. Chained to a pillar, he crouches in foetal position as the lash tears strips of skin from his back. The "coronation" which follows this punishment has all the hallmarks of sexual humiliation; Christ stands naked with his back to the camera, his skin criss-crossed with bloody weals[1] and his

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[1] The flogging scene echoes the film's opening sequence, in which we see the marks of a lash on Christ's back as he explains in a voice-over that he whips himself to rid himself of the voices which torment him. A strong tendency towards self-punishment is evident in his character throughout the film; he wilfully earns the scorn of his people by making the crosses upon which others will die -- a job no-one else will take -- and he waits abjectly all day at the Magdalene's house, while she services her clients, only in order to beg her forgiveness. Driven by guilt over his own inadequacies, he continually subjects himself to humiliating and punitive situations.

pale buttocks pathetically exposed to the camera in emphasis of his vulnerability, as a mocking Roman soldier places the crown of thorns upon his lowered head. On the march to Golgotha, he buckles under the weight of the cross and others come forward take up the burden for him. The crucifixion scene itself is explicit in its portrayal of Christ's suffering and subjectivity; close-ups and stammered editing give shuddering impact to the blow which drives the first long nail through his flesh and to the screams which accompany it. Scorsese's Christ hangs broken in body and spirit upon the cross, the anodyne of his final acceptance of his fate postponed by the extra-temporal and dream-like future of the "last temptation," in which he fulfils his human potential before returning to the agony of the present, and which lends to his crucifixion a further aspect of sexual penance. The Devil, appearing in the form of an angelic young girl, tempts Christ with the promise of sexual love with Mary Magdalene and the chance to marry and procreate, persuading him that God has relented and wishes His son to be happy. Temporarily succumbing to this promise of earthly fulfilment, Scorsese's Christ marries twice and sires children before choosing to return to the cross and fulfil his cruel destiny.

The theological notion and representational tradition of the crucifixion seeks to emphasise Christ's humanity by focusing upon his corporeality and the violation of his bodily integrity. The act of violence here symbolically suggests rape; the naked or semi-naked male body is laid out horizontally, prior to the uprighting of the cross, in a cruciform position which renders it exposed – the arms opened and outstretched, the legs downfixed, the torso unshielded and vulnerable, the prostrated body impaled. The fixed posture permits no relief from either the agonies of death or the voyeuristic scrutiny of onlookers. Death by crucifixion is slow and pitifully public; both the process itself and the manner of its representation invite prurience, empathetic identification, and compassion in equal measure. Despite its paradoxical and ambiguous significations, the image of Christ dying in torment upon the cross is nevertheless the central motif of Christianity -- a fact which prompted Nietzsche to argue that Christianity represents a religious glorification of suffering rather than of redemption, that its rituals and

teachings represent a celebration of despair rather than of hope, that it is death-obsessed and sickly rather than life-affirming:

> "*God on the cross* -- does no-one yet understand the terrible ulterior motive of this symbol? -- Everything that suffers, everything that hangs on the cross, is *divine*.....All of us hang on the cross, consequently we are *divine*.....We alone are divine.....Christianity was a victory, a *nobler* type of character perished through it -- Christianity has been humanity's greatest misfortune hitherto."[1]

The pietà, like images of the crucifixion, represents the damaged body of Christ in a manner that is in some important respects more resonant of femininity than of masculinity. The dead Christ, naked and bloodied, lies across his mother's lap with the languid grace of one who only sleeps; the image recalls both the dependency of the child and the passivity of a patriarchal ideal of womanhood. The pose, repeated in innumerable versions throughout the western tradition of religious art, has an aspect of sensual abandon; the lifeless body arches in death as if under a lover's touch; Christ's eyes are closed and his expression is peaceful, rapt, and inward-looking. This vision of male death emphasises physical passivity and, like the crucifixion scene, it invites both sensual identification and intimate contemplation. Richard Dyer notes that the modern stereotype of the homosexual as a sad young man has its roots in these models of religious artistic expression, in a tradition of Christian representation which "focuses on the suffering, male body, the moral worth and erotic beauty of white male flesh always seen at the point of agony."[2] The dominant culture's long tradition of conceptually linking subjection, sensitivity, and suffering with femininity, regardless of the biological sex of the subject, is clearly evidenced in the muddled and tense interplay of the innately sexualised adoration of the dying or dead Christ and the doctrinal refusal of his sexuality. Christ must be desirable and yet undesiring and undesired, feminine

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[1] Nietzsche, "The Antichrist", trans. Anthony M. Ludovici, in Dr. Oscar Levy (ed.) *The Complete Works of Friedrich Nietzsche*, ed. by Dr. Oscar Levy (London: George Allen and Unwin Ltd., 1927) Vol.16, pp204-205.

[2] Richard Dyer, "Coming out as going in: the image of the homosexual as a sad young man," in Dyer, *The Matter of Images* (London & New York: Routledge, 1993), p.80.

in his subjection, demeanour, and pain, yet wholly male in his socio-religious identification; the paradox is unanswerable save in terms of a redeeming, explanatory transcendence.

Leo Steinberg has remarked that "If the godhead incarnates itself to suffer a human fate, it takes on the condition of being both deathbound and sexed."[1] The sexual subtext of Christian doctrine, myth, and iconography, so commonly observed by analysts and critics, is at its most evident in textual accounts and artistic representations of Christ's passion. The non-fatal piercing of Christ's flesh at the hands and feet (or, more properly, at the wrists and ankles), the viscous flow of his blood from these wounds and from those inflicted by the crown of thorns and the centurion's spear, the semi-delirium induced by agony, the loss of self-determination, the vulnerable pose, the disturbing, compelling intimacy between killers and victim, the extreme expression of an overwhelmingly one-sided power relation -- all of these have obvious sexual connotations of a kind more conventionally associated with woman-as-victim. Christianity's tradition of mysticism and spirituality has proved, as Foucault notes, "incapable of dividing the continuous forms of desire, of rapture, of penetration, of ecstasy, of that outpouring which leaves us spent."[2]

The erotic compulsion of violence, the apparent sensual relation between agony and ecstasy, is complex and not yet fully understood but is everywhere evidenced in western culture. Fatal violence is erotically compelling, perhaps, because humanity perceives in death a final act of surrender, a last and absolute submission to and of the flesh, an experience which is intensely physical and yet which flees the body towards a state of transcendence which recalls both the religious and sexual concepts of "ecstasy." In the Christian tradition, the eroticisation of martyrdom has a further, crucial dimension; it permits sexuality to be displaced from the sexual body onto the suffering body while at the same time time offering up the flesh that is the object of its fascination to a demanding God. An act of displaced contrition is built into its conceptualization; that which is desired is also that which perishes, which pays the blood-price for the desire which it inspires. The notion that Christ

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[1] Steinberg, 1973, p.13.

[2] "A Preface to Transgression," in Foucault, *Language, Counter-Memory, Practice*, trans. Donald F. Bouchard and Sherry Simon, ed. by Donald F. Bouchard, (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1977), p.29.

dies for mankind's sins assumes a carnal dimension in relation to the eroticized aggrandisement of his suffering. The sinless ecstasy of agony allows the flesh of the martyr to remain chaste and holy while at the same time fetishizing and punishing it; the ritual of the martyr's death suggests both carnal purification and sacrificial appeasement, and therein lies its power to redeem.

Like Christ, Joan suffers a martyr's death. But, in a number of important respects, hers is a very different way of dying. Where Christ's crucifixion situates him as object in a voyeuristic space of a kind ordinarily associated with woman-as-victim, the manner of Joan's execution serves, in some respects at least, further to strip her of her troublesome femaleness. Her head is shaved and, where Christ is rendered semi-naked, Joan's doomed body is, in contrast, covered by a long, white penitence gown. The event of the burning itself is also radically different to the crucifixion. Joan's flesh, unlike Christ's, remains intact, holding its integrity to itself; her skin is not penetrated; she suffers no wound and gives forth no blood. At the stake, she is bound with her hands behind her back and even the smoke that issues from the pyre seems to lend her cover; in most filmic re-enactments of her death scene, the camera's gaze is libidinous and yet partially averted by strategic cuts and by aspects of the *mise en scène* which ensure that a certain modesty is observed in the spectacle of her suffering. In Jacques Rivette's *Jeanne la Pucelle: Les Prisons*, Joan goes to the stake wearing a white gown which reaches to the ground and her hair is concealed beneath a white mitre upon which are inscribed the words "Heretique Relapse Apostate." Her suffering is carefully constructed so as to exclude any erotic element, and the martyrdom scene is much shorter than in many other filmic representations. As the executioner leads Joan towards the pyre, he holds her bound hands high so that she is compelled to walk in an awkward posture which suggests prayer. Over and over again the scene of her approach towards the stake cuts to shots of her bare feet treading painfully on the harsh ground. The burning itself is a shockingly bleak and grimly matter-of-fact event. Much of the time, Joan is scarcely visible through the smoke; every now and then, it clears enough to allow a medium-shot of her praying; her voice is a distant mantra behind the foregrounded soundtrack of the

spit and crackle of the fire. As the flames reach her, Joan gasps out "Jesus!" six times, then screams his name. With that scream, the scene cuts to black and, after a pause, the end-titles roll.

Unlike Christ's martyrdom, at the end of Joan's execution there remains no corpse as testament to her humanity, no corporeal vessel for her resurrection. In Bresson's *The Trial of Joan of* Arc, even her few meagre possessions -- her boots, her clothes -- are thrown onto the pyre to be devoured by the flames. A double logic underlies this act of erasure. On the one hand, it represents an attempt by Joan's enemies to preclude the possibility that any relic of Joan might become an object of veneration among her countrymen, and she herself celebrated as a martyr. On the other hand, the eradication of all traces of Joan's earthly life underlines the film's dualistic division of the corporeal and the spiritual, in which the physical world is constructed as ephemeral and insubstantial. The world rids itself of Joan, but so too does Joan cast off the world; what remains is an impression of departed grace, of transcendence finally realized as absence.

The significant differences between the respective martyrdoms of Jesus Christ and Joan of Arc are written into the logic of the narratives in which they are involved. In the myth of Christ, the Son of God, the flesh which represents his humanity is all-important, as is evidenced by the ritual of holy communion. His divinity, his spiritual substance, needs no confirmation, but the redemptive message of his sojourn on earth resides in his becoming fully human, even to the extent of experiencing physical pain, terror, and death. His incarnation must be wholly authentic in order for his self-sacrifice to have any meaningful value; otherwise it would be no more than an empty act of mimesis, performed rather than experienced. In the logic of Christian belief, Christ can redeem humanity only by becoming fully human and his humanity, as much as the redemption that it represents, is his gift to mankind. Emphasis is therefore placed upon his body, his agony, his death, and his resurrection is a resurrection of this same human flesh rather than the spectral return of a Holy Ghost.

In the mythologised history of Joan of Arc, on the other hand, it is her humanity which is assumed from the outset and her acquired spiritual substance, her status as God's chosen saviour of France, which is constantly emphasised. The flames which consume her serve this religious and mythic purpose well; Joan's body is entirely destroyed and her story conventionally ends with an impression of her flight from the flesh into a state of pure spirit.

Nevertheless, this prioritising of Joan's spirituality over her corporeality has not prevented some film-makers from eroticizing this most complete of physical annihilations. In Victor Fleming's *Joan of Arc*, Joan is bound to the stake by heavy chains which cross her chest diagonally, emphasising her breasts in an image suggestive of low-octane sado-masochist pornography (see Figure 7, p.174). The camera lingers in close-up upon Bergman's melodramatic expressions of pain and fear; with her damp hair brushed back from her face and a suggestive sheen of sweat glossing her skin, she opens and closes her eyes in a slow delirium, her breath comes in gasps, she licks her dry lips, a silver teardrop shivers and glitters on her lower lashes, and she groans "Jesus! Jesus!" as the fire reaches her. In Marco de Gastyne's *La Merveilleuse Vie de Jeanne d'Arc*, Joan dies clutching at her throat and screaming (though the film is of course silent) as the flames ignite the hem of her gown and seethe upwards to engulf her. The erotic inspiration and sensational and prurient appeal of such images is undeniable, but there is nevertheless a certain distance inherent to them. Joan's death entails no intimate, penetrative violation of her body as Christ's does, and there is a subtle but important difference in its erotic nature; where Christ's punishment is itself sexualised (his flesh is manhandled, penetrated, made to bleed), Joan's torment only substitutes for a sexual act which is implied at a remove, vicariously; she remains untouched by human hands, unviolated and undefiled to the last. In the symbolic vocabulary of western culture, the ritual of death by fire brings not only extinction but also purification.

No film-maker has understood the theological need to subordinate Joan's humanity to her spiritual substance so well as Robert Bresson. In the opening scene of *The Trial of Jeanne d'Arc*, Joan's mother, Isabelle Romée, reads out the petition for Joan's posthumous vindication to an assembly of Church dignitaries. Dressed in a nun's concealing habit, she

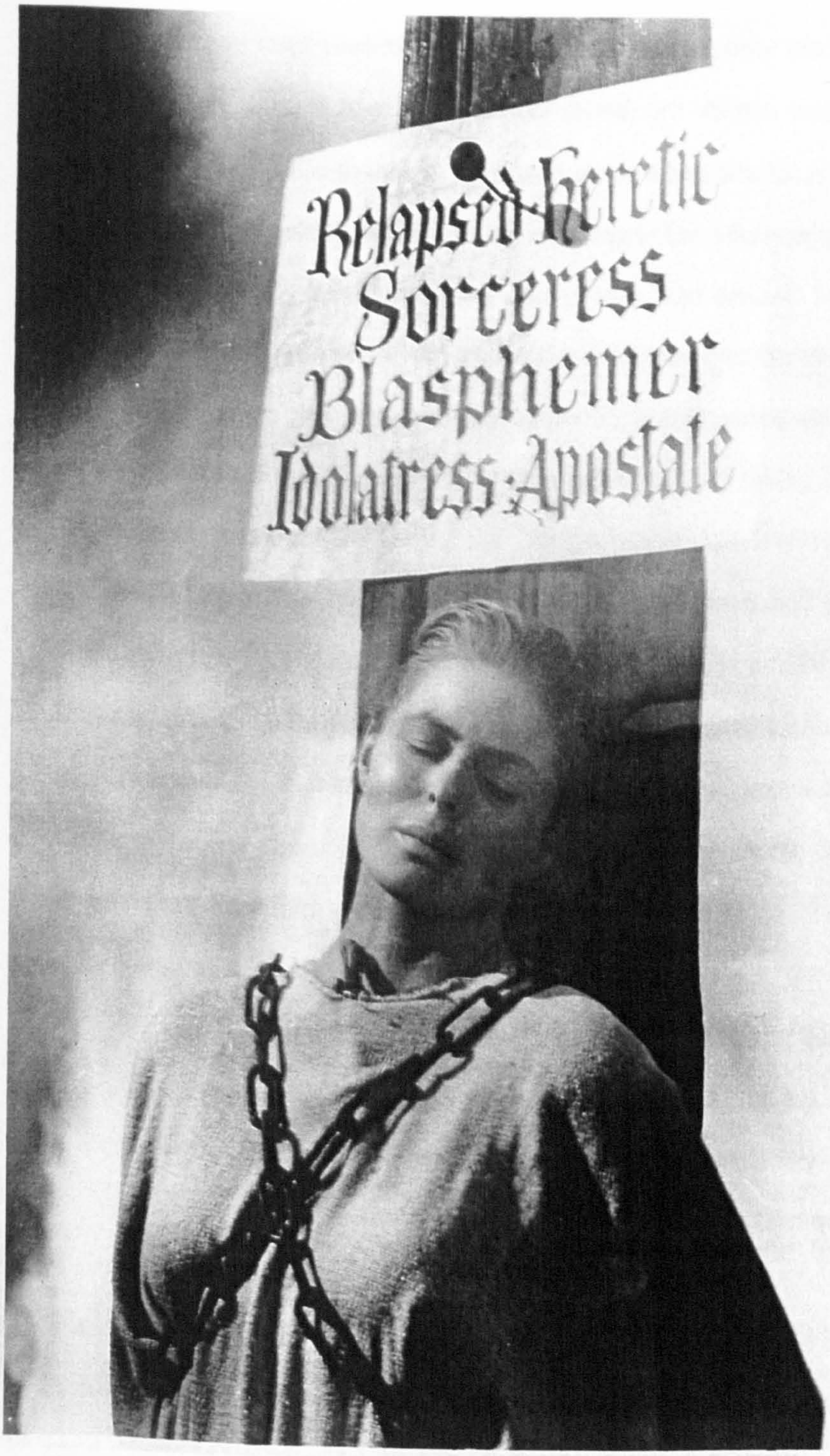

Figure 7. Joan (Ingrid Bergman) at the stake in Fleming's *Joan of Arc* (1948).

(BFI Stills, Posters, and Designs)

stands with her back towards the camera; beyond her, only the lower bodies of the men she is addressing, clad in fine ecclesiastical robes, are visible. Isabelle Romée's voice is calm and measured, to the extent of betraying no emotion whatsoever. Her face is never shown and there are no cuts to reveal the faces of any of the others who are present; throughout the scene, they remain impersonalized, anonymous, and distant. The scene's import resides in the words that are spoken and the fragmented images which signify the context of their utterance. All emotion is carefully excluded, its absence all the more striking for the poignancy and dramatic potential of the event which is taking place in the scene; after all, here stands a mother petitioning the Church to put right the wrong that it has done to her child -- the child that the same Church once condemned and burnt -- and yet she speaks without a trace of anger or grief, and she is carefully filmed with her back to the camera so that her unseen facial expressions and individualized identity can only be imagined.

So begins Bresson's coldly ascetic reconstruction of Joan's trial, his film pursuing grace through the suppression of emotion, of social relationships, of a palpable humanity. Of Bresson's abstract film style, Amedee Ayfré observes that,

> ".....there is the abstraction which proceeds by extension and enables one to classify beings according to their most general characteristics: Man, Animal, Living, Being, or Commerce, Industry, Justice (the totality of judges). Then there is that which proceeds by intensification and which attempts less to classify beings than to reach that which makes a being what he is, his essence -- let's say his soul. The first form of abstraction does not exist in Bresson's work."[1]

Ayfre's point is an important and insightful one, but he overlooks the fact that Bresson strips his subjects to the bare detail of the first mode of abstraction in order to break through it into the second mode. The judges, guards, and Joan herself are depersonalized, stripped of their complex humanity so that they function solely as agents of the abstract concepts -- religious authority, secular power, spirituality, and so on -- which they represent. The documentary

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[1] "The Universe of Robert Bresson" in Cameron (ed.), 1969, p.6.

flatness and deliberated impersonality of Bresson's film style, the film's careful subordination of emotionalism and drama to the requirements of form, its preoccupation with the surface aesthetics of the objects before the camera, gives its characters the status and significance of ciphers. Joan and her unnamed judges are removed from their historical and social context through the exclusion of these from the text and they are distanced from each other through the film's refusal to allow them any ordinary human interaction. Their eyes do not meet, their voices and facial expressions are emptied of emotion save on those rare occasions when the tension causes the surface calm to rupture with a suddenness and brevity that only enhances the hieratic formalism that it disrupts. Their individual personalities are reduced to stark functional outlines which serve to configure a vision of a universal humanity encoded in the formal structures and aesthetic orchestration of the action and circumstance in which they are involved. The predominantly static camerawork, the rhythmic pattern of the editing, the fragmented and dissonant images, the sparseness and simplicity of the sets, the understated choreography of the actors' movements, the absence of emotional expressivity -- by these means, "the real" in Bresson's film is limited to aesthetics, to exterior presences and interior absences. A double abstraction is achieved, in which drama and character are reduced to abstract functions of a narrative related through formal aesthetic construction rather than emotional action and which serves, in turn, to imply spiritual Otherness, a sense of the invisible Immanent which lies beyond the surface of physical objects. The world of the film is shifted to a different plane in which, as Paul Schrader writes, "the spiritual and the physical can coexist, still in tension and unresolved, but as part of a larger scheme in which all phenomena are more or less expressive of a larger reality -- the Transcendent."[1]

Bresson's invokation of the transcendent depends upon the cold aesthetic discipline with which his film embraces its subjects. It depends upon a construction of the concrete world and of the body which inhabits it in such a manner as to indicate the possibility of a spiritual escape, of a flight into grace. Schrader points to the formal characteristics which Bresson's

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[1] Schrader, 1972, p.83.

protagonists habitually share with the faces portrayed in Byzantine iconography, detailing the "long forehead, the lean features, the closed lips, the blank stare, the frontal view, the flat light....."[1] The casting of Florence Carrez, a non-professional actress, as Joan represents, above all, an aesthetic decision. Carrez's long, oval, and relentlessly serene face, framed by hair that falls midway between long and short, her pale skin, her expressionless, distant gaze, somehow suggestive of both dispassion and intensity, all of these are aspects of a careful chosen physical presence rather than of performance, of a surface beyond which the film seeks not 'character' in the ordinary sense but rather an essential grace. Whereas Falconetti, in Dreyer's film, is aggressively emotional at the moment where Joan chooses to die rather than live as a stranger to herself, Carrez performs the same scene as if life is ultimately of little consequence to Joan; she sits straightbacked and calm in her cell, her face inscrutable, beyond emotion because she is already, in the most crucial sense, beyond life and the concerns of life. "Joan's death is really for her the beginning of a new life," writes Leo Murray, "one for which she had longed and in which she had expressed confidence."[2] In Bresson's film, Joan is a saint first and a human being only second, whereas in Dreyer's film Joan is always human first and becomes a saint *through* her fully-realized humanity. The difference between these two constructions of Joan is essentially one of faith; Dreyer's film *seeks* the human spirit through its excavation of human faith where Bresson's *expresses* a faith in the exterior and invisible divine.

Dreyer's Joan is truly a tragic hero, but Bresson's film achieves Joan's transcendence at the expense of her tragedy; "Jeanne's liberation comes through a hideous death....." observes Susan Sontag, but it fails to affect the audience "because she is so depersonalized.....that she does not seem to mind dying"[3] (see Figure 8, p.178). Joan is God-possessed from the first, a creature of implacable mystery, of pure spirit only temporarily incarcerated in a cage of flesh, whose inexorably unconcerned progress towards her fatal destiny is only briefly disrupted by the momentary reaching back towards life which compels

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[1] Schrader, 1972, p.100.
[2] "The Trial of Joan of Arc" in Cameron (ed.), 1969, p.103.
[3] "Spiritual Style in the films of Robert Bresson" in Sontag, 1994, p.187.

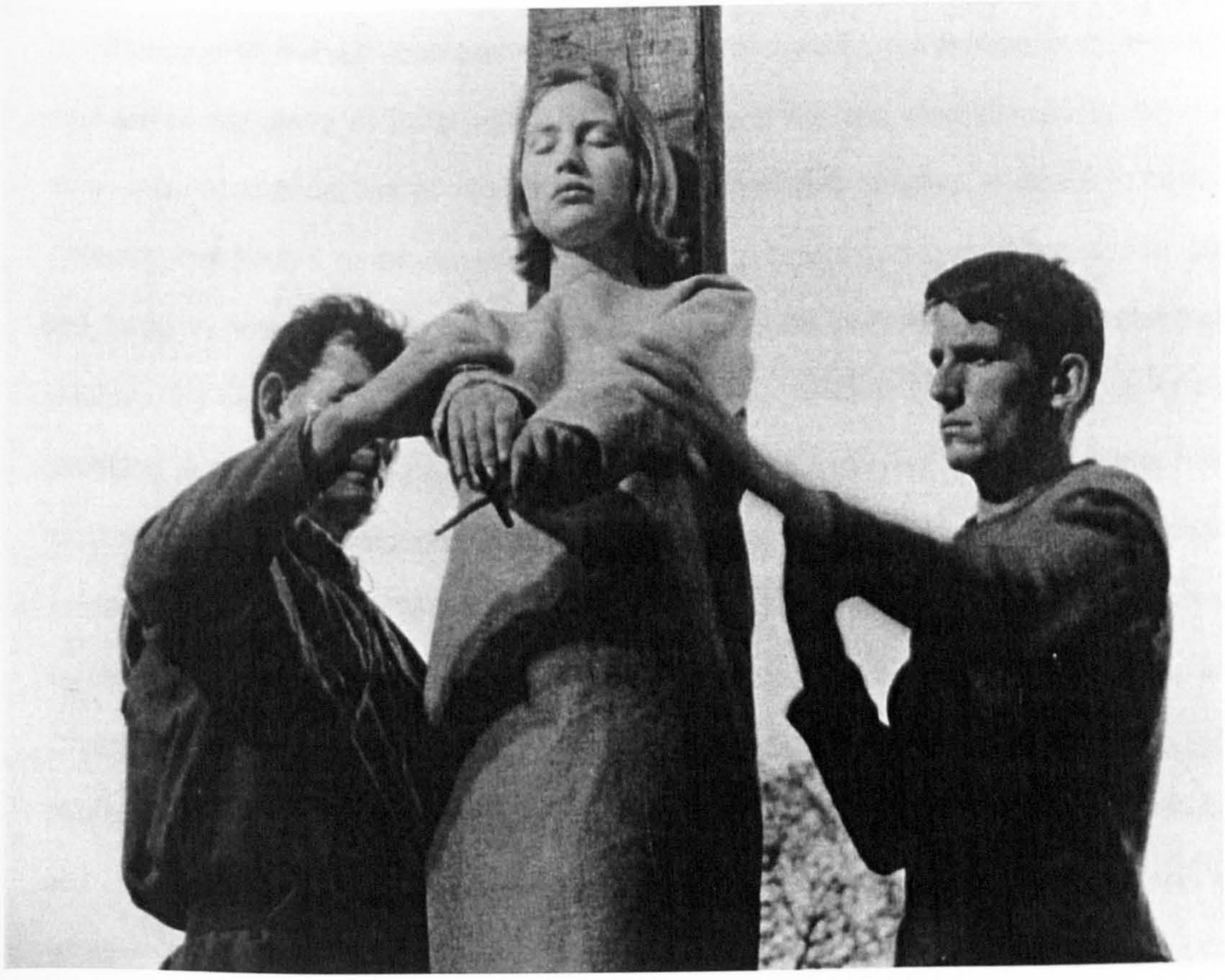

Figure 8. Joan (Florence Carrez) calmly accepts her fate in Bresson's *The Trial of Joan of Arc* (1962).

(BFI Stills, Posters, and Designs)

her to sign the confession that she will soon retract. Her last steps, as she goes to the stake, are taken at a running trot, as if she is impatient to leave this world. Her death is enacted without any indication of either emotional or physical suffering; her face remains expressionless throughout, she speaks her final words in a calm, quiet voice, and a dry cough is her only response to the flames and the smoke that engulf her.

Florence Carrez as Joan has nothing of the robustness, the hot-blooded presence and soul-driven humanity of Falconetti. Bresson's film is entirely uninterested in the material socio-cultural implications of Joan's gender transgression. Instead, it seeks to realize the potential that such a transgression presents for the visual expression of an ascetic denial of the flesh. In this sense, Joan's reputation for androgyny suits the film's preoccupation with dualism, its need to signify the absolute division of the soul and the body. Joan's cross-dressing is constructed as an indication of her sexlessness; her desire to retain her male clothing in order to protect her virginity is an expression of her ascetic need to maintain her sexless state. Thus, her androgyny becomes a negation of the body itself, a sign of her transcendence of the flesh, symbolising the dominion of the spirit over the body. Its hieratic meaning is conveyed through the final subordination of all emotion, of all sensuality, of all of those interactions and reactions which constitute life's gravitational pull. Joan's androgyny is not constructed through the employment of specifically masculine signifiers -- the masculinized codes of dress, behaviour, language, and so on -- but through the reduction of *all* gender signifiers. Her stillness, her economy of gesture, words, and facial expressions, the bland blank youthfulness of her face, and the subtle, otherworldly knowingness of her demeanour, work in concert with the austere plainness of her male dress to deflect attention away from her sexed humanity, from the vessel of the body that they screen. Joan's androgyny bespeaks a disavowal not just of gender but, through the abstraction of gender, of humanity itself.

The array of similarities between the myths of Christ and Joan of Arc points to the epistemological limits of western culture's religious imagination. The gestures, structures,

circumstances, and responses that humanity reads into life, in order to impose a metaphysical order and meaning upon its chaotic processes, constitute a finite vocabulary through which mankind strives to give expression to its occult fears, hopes, and uncertainties. Recast in the image of Christ, Joan of Arc appears to configure meanings that are already familiar within the Christalogical tradition; the particular, more subversive elements and aspects of Joan's story are contained by the tautological inflection of its coded reiteration of Christ's myth. The notions about gender which inform and shape the mythology associated with each figure assume a significance which extends far beyond the matter of gender. In both myths, gender functions as a site upon which notions of the relation of the natural to the supernatural converge. The mythic Joan figure doesn't just *happen* to be transgressive; rather, Joan of Arc has been plucked from history and become mythic precisely *because* of her transgressive substance. Transgression, in the context of the Christian mythos, bespeaks transcendence. Here, androgyny functions as a metaphor signifying the subject's supernatural status; it allows the mythic figure to be *both* recognisably human and supernaturally other.

The logic underlying this semantic association between transgression and transcendence is simple enough. The transcendent necessarily lies beyond the boundaries of discourse, beyond the limit at which language[1] addresses the ineffable and falls back upon itself, remarking the mysterious realm of silent absence that it cannot capture. Language can do no more than recognize the limit which confounds it; how is it possible to speak of absence except in terms of those presences which have ceased to be present? The concept of transcendence forces language to overreach itself, *to utilise its own failure for the purpose of expressing that which cannot be expressed except through the articulated fact of this failure.* To this end, language employs a concept which is native to the limit, which glides effortlessly between speech and silence, presence and absence, intelligibility and epistemological obscurity; it invokes the anti-grammatical eloquence of transgression for the purpose of

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[1] I am here using the term 'language' in its widest sense, meaning all systematised modes of communication.

signifying the super-grammatical transcendent. And therein lies an extraordinary act of creation; the utterance of silence.

The mythic Joan of Arc belongs, like Christ, both to the corporeal world and to the supernatural. Her corporeal presence bespeaks her humanity but her androgynous appearance and behaviour marks her out as one apart, as one who eludes epistemological containment. Of itself, her gender transgression does not implicate the transcendent. For this, the other major aspects of her story are crucial. Joan's voices and visions, her private communions with angels, configure an essential mystery and mysticism. In both history and myth, Joan speaks and hears the epistemologically ungraspable language of the soul. Her proud and carefully protected virginity announces her virtuousness and integrity in a metaphor of living flesh. Her death at the stake affords her the status of a martyr and symbolises her release from the body into the realm of pure spirit. The various elements of her story and transgressive identity cohere to signify the transcendent as an "absent presence".

It is this concept of the transcendent as an "absent presence," as a realm beyond the limits of language, which gives Dreyer's *The Passion of Joan of Arc* its evocative power. In the antagonism between the word and the image, the concrete and the symbolic, the film indicates a massive discursive and epistemological failure which, in turn, serves to implicate the presence of the transcendent manifested in the person of Joan. The film makes no attempt to represent Joan's voices and visions; they exist as incommunicable communications in a mysterious dimension outside the text, and Dreyer is content to leave them there. For the critic Tom Milne, "Joan is an impossible heroine, at least for Dreyer's kind of cinema, since she stands alone, her fears and hopes communicated by and to those mysterious invisible voices, which even he couldn't quite seize through her eyes, her expressions, her gestures."[1] Milne understands this absence as a failure of Dreyer's cinema, but it is surely better understood as its triumph. The greatness of Dreyer's direction lies in his willingness to knowingly fail and to allow that failure to make its own point. It is through this

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[1] Tom Milne, *The Cinema of Carl Dreyer* (New York: A.S. Barnes, 1971), p.92.

failure -- through the cinematic acknowledgement that the transcendent exists beyond the limit of that which can be represented and epistemologically contained -- that the mythic Joan figure at last comes home to itself.

CHAPTER EIGHT

MYTH

Throughout this study I have made reference to the "mythic" Joan figure and to the "myth" of Joan of Arc. I have justified my use of these terms by pointing to the logic of myth which informs both Joan's history itself (through her invocation and enactment of certain mythic tropes and gestures and through the mythic prefigurations which allowed her the cultural "space" to realize her strange career) and the tradition of her history's cultural reiteration (in which the mythic aspects of her history are endlessly elaborated within the structure of tragedy). But there is also a deeper sense in which Joan of Arc is a mythic figure, and it is to this that we must now turn our attention. Before we can do this, however, we must first look at myth itself. What is it and how does it function?

Harry Levin points out that the term "mythology" comes from the Greek words *mythos*, meaning "word" or "speech," and *logos*, meaning "tale" or "story." The notion of myth as a "word-story" (a story about words?) is an evocative one, as will become clear later in this chapter, but Levin soon exhausts the wisdom of etymology and turns his attention away from the elusiveness of a definition to instead consider the distinction between mythoclasm and mythopoesis.[1] This is of course very interesting, but it is of little use to us here. Similarly confronted by the perennial problem of defining myth, K.K. Ruthven quotes St. Augustine's highly appropriate meditation on time: "I know very well what it is, provided that nobody asks me; but if I am asked and try to explain, I am baffled."[2] Professor Ruthven goes on to point out that myth is seldom studied in its own right but is rather addressed in the discourses of a

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[1] Harry Levin, "Some Meanings of Myth" in Henry A. Murray (ed.), *Myth and Mythmaking* (Boston: Beacon Press, 1969), pp103-114.
[2] From St. Augustine's *Confessions* (xi. 14), quoted in Ruthven, *Myth* (London: Methuen, 1976), p.1.

variety of disciplines, ranging from anthropology to linguistics. This, naturally, only serves to confuse the issue of defining myth since,

> "Each looks at mythology in the light of its own preoccupations, which means that an inquisitive outsider who drifts promiscuously from one to another is likely to conclude that the various specialists are not really talking about the same thing at all, but about different things under the same name."[1]

Given myth's polymathic appeal, it is small wonder that there is no consensus as to exactly what qualities may be considered as definitive of myth. But, although we may never arrive at a satisfactory definition, we may at least examine some of myth's operations in order to shed some light upon the mythic configuration of Joan of Arc and her story.

In his 1957 essay "Myth Today," Roland Barthes argues that myth is a species of ideologically-motivated lie, an underhand and misleading transformation of "history into nature."[2] Myth, he suggests, is a type of speech which performs an insidious act of colonisation, mimesis, and distortion upon object reality: "it has turned reality inside out, it has emptied it of history and filled it with nature, it has removed from things their human meaning so as to make them signify a human insignificance."[3] Myth devours nature and replaces it with culture, falsely representing culture *as* nature so that ideology can masquerade as truth. In the course of making this argument, Barthes, as Andrew Leak points out,[4] is forced to translate his initial, semiological definition of myth as a "metalanguage" (by which he means a connotative language system) into a notion of myth as a discourse which propagates an ideologically-invested conceptualization of reality. Barthes' ready application of semiological theory and methodology to a notion of myth as a discursive *practice* presents a variety of attendant difficulties which it is useful to examine since they provoke a number of

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[1] Ruthven, 1976, p.3.
[2] "Myth Today," in Barthes, *Mythologies*, trans. Annette Lavers (London: Vintage, 1993), p.129.
[3] *Ibid.*, pp142-143.
[4] See Leak, *Barthes: Mythologies* (London: Grant and Cutler Ltd., 1994), p.25.

important questions concerning the nature and functions of myth. However, we must begin with a consideration of why it is that a purely semiological interpretation of myth is inadequate.

For Barthes, "culture" and "reality" are antithetical notions. Reality is that which has an objective presence in the world, which exists independently of human interpretation and is complete in itself. Culture, on the other hand, is artificially created in all its forms; it is the way in which man thinks about and articulates objective reality. Of itself, there seems little to disagree with in this distinction; clearly reality and culture are not one and the same thing (though it should perhaps be acknowledged that culture, although artificially constructed, nevertheless takes its place in the dimension of the real, and any notion we may have of reality is, unavoidably, mediated by culture). But a major problem arises when Barthes extends this distinction to the operations of language to argue that there exists a denotative system (wherein language operates a primary, unmediated relation between the signified and the signifier to produce the sign) and a connotative system (wherein a second order of ideologically-informed cultural constructions appropriate the first-order sign as a signifier in a second-order relationship to produce a second-order sign which *imitates* the operations of the first-order sign). Barthes describes the first order sign as a "language object" (it is denotative) and the second-order sign as a "metalanguage," of which myth is an example (it is connotative).

The problem with this is that while these distinctions between reality and culture and between denotation and connotation seem clear-cut and logical in theoretical diagram, they bear little relation to actual discursive *practices* -- a fact which has profound consequences when we consider the cultural operations of myth. Firstly, we need to recognize the unavoidability of culture (or, in Foucauldian terms, the impossibility of extricating ourselves from discourse). Culture is *already there* wherever humanity encounters reality; it is, inevitably, an aspect of mankind's experience of the "real" and, specifically, of the articulation (whether internally or externally expressed) of the "real" which itself *constitutes* the experience of the enounter. While we may make a theoretical distinction between reality

itself and the *experience* of reality (experience being both a product and a producer of culture), we nevertheless arrive at a practical impasse; it is the experience of reality (whether direct or indirect) which affords humanity a notion of the real, but the experience itself is already, and unavoidably, prefigured through the mediation of culture. In this sense, culture can be said to "produce" the real. A rose is a rose is a rose is a rose, but the instant I encounter it -- which I must do, either directly or indirectly, if it is to be part of any reality that I can conceive of -- it becomes an *experience* of a rose, and this experience comes complete with repertoire of culturally-informed meanings. To encounter the rose, to enunciate its realness, is also to "read" the rose within the context of my own cultural make-up. The "realness" of the rose is thus prefigured by: an aesthetic sensisibility (the rose is "beautiful"), a superficial "scientific" awareness (the rose is a botanical object), a sensual foreknowledge (the rose has a heady perfume, sharp thorns, *etc.*), a symbolic association (the rose signifies romance), a certain invocation of geography and season (the rose is representative of an English summer).

The point is simply this: the rose (or any other aspect of reality) of course has a reality which exists independently of my experiencing it, but the moment I encounter and remark that reality I subject it to cultural constructions. In my experience of the rose's realness, it ceases to be its own self and becomes the vessel of any number of culturally-inscribed interpretations and associations. I cannot experience the reality of the rose as denotative and, if I "speak" the rose to a second party she too will experience the rose, indirectly, through the medium of culture. To imagine that a purely denotative language[1] can exist in practice is plainly wrong, since the experience and articulation of the "real" inevitably brings culture into play and polysemy into operation. All ordinary language is essentially connotative; it cannot represent reality just as it is but rather always represents an inevitable *negotiation* between reality and culture. What this means, of course, is that connotation is not particular to myth, since *all* language is necessarily also "metalanguage." In order to consider the operation of the mythic discourse we must go beyond the competency of semiology, but

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[1] I am using the term 'language' as Barthes does, to refer to any system of communication (excepting abstract scientific discourses such as mathematics, to which other arguments apply).

before we do this we must first examine the relation between myth and ideology, since this impacts upon the central issue of myth's polysemic substance.

For Barthes, myth is a semiological form through which an implied "author" (in the loosest sense) nefariously represents ideology as reality: "there is no myth without motivated form."[1] Here, myth's primary function is as a means of replacing reality with a poisonous ideologically-loaded simulacrum which serves the interests of whatever motivating agency orchestrated its construction. But this paranoid sense of myth's underlying ideological motivation and purpose has more in common with the discourses of propaganda and advertisement than it does with the allegories of classical mythology; it suggests that myth's *raison d'être* is to *persuade*. Indeed, the "myths" which Barthes subjects to semiological analysis are precisely those which are purposefully produced by the operations of capitalism and imperialism for the purpose of ideological persuasion and dissemination. Is Barthes then wrong to refer to these as "myths"? The answer is surely "no" -- though with some reservations -- since myth is undoubtedly sometimes recruited in order to propagate ideologies and to 'rewrite' reality according to an ideological schema. But here Barthes' semiological perspective becomes misleading. The notion that myth transforms culture into nature -- which is also a characteristic operation of ideology -- leads him to dissolve the distinction between ideology and myth and to use these two terms almost interchangeably. It hardly needs to be said that myth is *not* in fact synonymous with ideology. Myth arises out of ideologically-informed cultures and societies; it is shaped by ideology, it reflects, tests, and recasts ideology within its processes, but ideology is not its entire substance and neither is myth dedicated to the dissemination of ideology *except in those instances where it is recruited for that purpose by an interested motivating agency.* Ideology is part of the fabric of myth (how can it not be, given that culture is inevitably saturated with ideology?) but its dissemination is only rarely myth's determining purpose. A distinction must be made between the intentional, motivated ideological substance with which certain operations of myth are "consciously" invested (and for which there must be an implied "author" and an implied

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[1] Barthes, 1993, p.126.

moment of creation) and the "unconscious," unmotivated ideological import of other modes of myth (which have no implied "author" but instead arise out of cultural *processes* which afford neither an instant of genesis nor of finitude; in this sense, myth is never "written" since it is always in the process of *being* "written").

What is lacking from Barthes' analysis of myth is any sense of myth's polysemy, of its suggestiveness, of its engagement of the "reader" in a dynamic meaning-producing relationship, of its articulation of focused uncertainties. All of this is either overlooked or denied in order to support the emphasis upon myth's ideological nature and function. For Barthes, myth, like ideology, is a motivated deceit; myth, like ideology, is a message which is passively received rather than dynamically read (Barthes uses the term "receiver" to suggest exactly this); myth, like ideology, does not *seek* meanings but rather *imposes* meanings:

> "In passing from history to nature, myth acts economically: it abolishes the complexity of human acts, it gives them the simplicity of essences, it does away with all dialectics, with any going back beyond what is immediately visible, it organizes a world which is without contradictions because it is without depth, a world wide open and wallowing in the evident, it establishes a blissful clarity: things appear to mean something by themselves."[1]

It is clearly ridiculous to suggest that *all* myth functions in this way; one has only to recall the myths of Antigone and Oedipus to recognize that complexity and contradiction are the very substance of this type of myth. What is required, then, is a taxonomy of myth, a means of differentiating between a variety of mythic operations and myth-types. Unfortunately, this study is not the place for such a taxonomy, but we can at least make a useful start by remarking the distinction between two orders of myth to which I shall refer, using Calvet's terminology but not his definitions,[2] as the *mythe-allégorie* and the *mythe-mensonge*. Both of these terms refer to distinct types of mythic instances or 'texts' which are static imprints produced by and, in sum, constituting the mythic discourse. Marshall McLuhan usefully

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[1] Barthes, 1993, p.143.
[2] See Louis-Jean Calvet, *Roland Barthes: un regard politique sur le signe* (Paris: Petite Bibliothèque Payot, 1973), pp37-68.

describes an individual myth as "a single snapshot of a complex process,"[1] and, because of this relation between the mythic instance and the mythic process, we need to keep the following distinctions in mind as we consider the operations of myth:

1. Myth is a discourse, a way of "speaking" humanity's experience of the world. All individual myths belong to this discourse; they are aspects of its practices and are informed by its logic.

2. Any *mythe-allégorie* belongs to a mythological "family" or grouping which consists of innumerable variants of that myth and which, in turn, is a branch of the mythic discourse. Every new articulation of a single myth constitutes a new variant and it is in this sense that a myth is never complete, never present in any absolute, definitive form, never "written" in all its fullness.

3. The notion that any single myth constitutes a discrete "text" is in some respects artificial, since the mythic "text" is always involved in the mythic discourse and functions as a *locus* of a set of mythic themes and practices which extend beyond its boundaries.

These interrelated operations of myth make the term "myth" itself somewhat confusing, but it is essential that we recognize these levels of mythic articulation if we are to make sense of the myth of Joan of Arc in each of the two broadly defined modes indicated by the terms *mythe-allégorie* and *mythe-mensonge*. We shall consider each of these in turn:

1. *The mythe-allégorie*

It is significant that, in common usage, the term "myth" indicates a story which is patently untrue. A distinguishing quality of the *mythe-allégorie* is its undisguised artificiality, which is the quality that enables us to identify its presence in the first place. But this aspect of artificiality in no way implicates an "author"; rather, it is an aspect of the mythic discourse itself, of its self-reflexivity, its preference for conceptualization over explanation. What is absent from the *mythe-allégorie* is an absolute sense of its beginning, of its having been created fully-formed and complete. We can trace the evolution of a single myth backwards to a moment of primordial illegibility, beyond which it dissolves into the opaque substances of

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[1] "Myth and the Mass Media," in Murray (ed.), 1969, p.289.

its original generation, but we cannot grasp the singular act of its emergence into being. The moment that we attempt to scrutinize a myth as a single, definitive "text" -- as a discrete entity frozen in a consistent form, isolated from the mythic discourse and its myth-grouping and complete in itself -- we blind ourselves to its dynamic properties of interpellation and to its regenerative flexibility. The myth continues to be a myth, to participate in the mythic discourse to which it belongs, but we are no longer responding to it on those terms. This is the paradox of myth; its form demands interpretation, demands continual "textualisation" -- this is how it regenerates itself -- and yet myth always exceeds its "textual" expression since the very act of isolating and articulating a single myth changes it once again so that it is never captured in all its fullness, never completed within a single utterance.

Myth is inherently unstable; it is a process of culture which absorbs culture, drawing meanings into its form, reforming itself to accommodate them, reconfiguring the context of their expression, moulding them into new configurations. But myth is also outwards-looking and outwards-acting; its dilemmas, its gestures and symbolic articulations, impact upon the "real" world in the act of making it legible. "The myths that are the treasure of an instructed community provide the models and the programs in terms of which the internal cast of identities is molded and enspirited," argues Bruner.[1] Myth is neither barren nor wholly abstract; it provides not just a means of "speaking" the world but also a means of "being" in the world. We have seen how Joan of Arc's history was itself made possible by myth -- was, that is, *produced* by the interaction of the mythic and the concrete in as much as it represents an enactment of certain mythic themes and gestures in the dimension of the "real." The figure of Joan of Arc had to be culturally imaginable before it could be realized in fact, and this realization was made possible by the mythic resonances of Joan's virginity, by her resemblance to the warrior maidens of classical mythology, her extraordinary and Christ-like sense of messianic destiny which found a powerful audience of mythologically-informed believers and supporters. Joan's history is what it is because she appropriated myth's symbolism, mimetically recalled certain mythic figures, enacted myth's gestures and logic,

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[1] Jerome S. Bruner, "Myth and Identity," in Murray (ed.), 1969, p.286.

and was received in mythic terms by her contemporaries; she was both strange and mythologically familiar. In this sense, she functions as a mediator between myth and reality; myth enters her history and, in its turn, her history enters myth. After her death, she became wholly mythologised (does any account of her story, whether historical or fictional, wholly exclude myth? No, because the mythic resonances of Joan of Arc are ever-present both within and without her history). This translation into myth is informed by her history, with its causality and circumstance, and it finds its thematic focus in Joan's transgressiveness.

However, for all that it may both inform and accommodate history's "truths," the *mythe-allégorie* never allies itself with other discourses and it has no pretensions towards "science." It does not say -- as, for example, history does -- that "this is what *actually* happened in the real world and this is how and this is why and here is the evidence to prove that it happened in exactly this way." This kind of truth -- the truth of the hypothesis, which seeks and requires the validation of concrete facts -- is not the kind of truth that the *mythe-allégorie* expresses. Why should it be? Myth is not concerned with descriptions or explanations of reality itself but rather with the processes and nature of reality's epistemological construction; it is, as its name suggests, a "word-story." There is a question, not an answer, at the heart of every *mythe-allégorie*, an unspoken "what if.....?" of speculation, of playful and terrifying extensions of logic, of dilemma and paradox. When Prometheus steals fire from the gods and suffers eternal torment as a result, the mythic inscription of his actions and fate relates his story not as a "history" (that of Prometheus himself) nor even as a parable but rather as the allegorical expression of deep uncertainties about the location and efficacy of boundaries and the potential consequences of humanity's ability to transgress them, to overreach itself, to trespass in ignorant ambition upon the sacred and the prohibited (that which humanity prohibits itself, recognizing the limits of human competency), to possess the power of a god without the omniscient wisdom of a god. The myth of Prometheus does not simply tell of the crime and punishment of Prometheus but rather invites a consideration of humanity's place in the order of things and, by further implication, of the order of things itself. Every age interprets the Promethean act according to its own science. "Fire" becomes Faust's absolute

knowledge, or Frankenstein's monster, or nuclear weaponry, or genetic engineering, but the question that humanity poses to itself through the myth of Prometheus remains essentially the same and loses none of its relevance. By what means other than myth can humanity confront a dilemma that is at once so abstract and so concrete, so immediate and so eternal, so particular and yet so universal?

The *mythe-allégorie* frequently (but not always) occurs where other discourses reveal themselves to be inadequate, and the mythic discourse is often adapted to make sense of matters which cannot be fully expressed or explained by other means ("creation" myths in societies lacking an adequately developed scientific discourse, for example). The mythic subject is frequently a conceptualization of a blurred epistemological boundary, expressed in metaphor; thus in myth we find a proliferation of man-beasts, of metamorphic gods which take on human and animal forms, of hermaphrodites, of shape-shifters, of transgressive identities and acts. Orpheus, Prometheus, the Minotaur, Hermaphroditus, Oedipus, Electra, Faust, Christ, the Amazons -- each of these mythic figures signifies or perpetrates a challenge to one or another boundary, and each of these challenges entails a confrontation with the limits of the epistemological and/or ethical ordering of man's universe. Such myths articulate anxious questions about the veracity of epistemological constructs. Where does the Beast end and man begin? Where does man end and where do the gods begin? Where lies the boundary between male and female? Between life and death? How certain are any such boundaries? How can we be sure that epistemological classifications, by which means all identities are created, are as inviolable as we imagine? What happens if they are violated, and with what might they be replaced? The consequences of transgression are often dire; a primal darkness enters the protagonist's world, chaos is unleashed, there is murder, mayhem, despair. But often transgression is also a means of reconciliation, of a coming-to-terms with and partial assimilation of the "other." Achilles, raised wild on Skyros as a girl among girls, meets the Amazon Queen Penthesilea in mortal combat; male and female engage in a deadly battle for supremacy from which Achilles (in true patriarchal tradition) emerges as victor. But as Penthesilea dies by his sword, Achilles raises the visor of her

helmet and, gazing upon her dead face, he -- crucially -- *recognizes himself in her.* Such mythic acts and instances are negotiations of otherness -- they propose the threat of the other, the destruction of the other, and, amazingly and tragically, the recognition of "other" as "self."

As we have already seen, categorical definitions, and the individual and social identities which they inscribe, depend upon notions of otherness, of irreducible differences, which in turn rely upon the apparent constancy of the relationship between form and meaning. Where such relationships demonstrably break down, all is thrown open to question. In the *mythe-allégorie*, such doubts are articulated in the polysemy of metaphor and metonymy; the universality of the mythic discourse does not arise from its mimetic reconstruction of "nature," as Barthes suggests, but rather from a self-conscious artifice which reflects, reconfigures, and comments upon, the essential artifice of all epistemologies and discourses. Myth is in essence polysemic; this is both its nature and its concern. Itself constructed connotatively, in such away as to invite a variety of "readings," it further refers itself to the acts of reading upon which all discourses depend. In myth, the production of meaning is sited not only in the formal arrangement of signs (the mythic "text") but also in the dynamic act of reading which myth demands. This is the substance of myth; it refuses to ground itself "scientifically" in objective reality and it never refers itself to objective evidence; it uses the connotative muscle of metaphor, metonymy, and synecdoche in order to confront, expose, and overcome the limitations of epistemological constructs; it adopts narrative structures but remains fluid, suggestive, unstable, unresolvable. In myth, absolute meaning is always deferred; this is both its discursive technique (the multiple possibilities of polysemy) and its object-idea (the fact of polysemy, of the "reader's" dynamic role in the production of meaning). In this sense, the theoretical distinction between mythic form and the mythic concept is erroneous; as Marshall McLuhan remarks, "the medium is the message."[1] Formal construction and conceptualization cannot and do not occur independently of each other in myth; their relation

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[1] "Myth and Mass Media" in Murray (ed.), 1969, p.289.

is symbiotic and mutually determining. The mythic form *is* the conceptualization of the mythic "idea," and *vice-versa*.

The *mythe-allégorie* is not a static, single myth continually repeated in consistent form within culture; it is always the sum of its variants, always the same and yet always changing, and therefore always incomplete. Furthermore, it belongs to a mythic discourse which is itself the sum of its variants and operations (of which *mythe-allégorie* is one) and which is itself a process of culture engaged at the limits of the epistemological ordering of object reality. In this light, the seemingly endless reiteration of the myth of Joan of arc becomes both explicable and, in itself, meaningful. Rather than remarking an endemic and puzzling lack of cultural imagination, the obsessive returns of western art and literature to the subject of Joan of Arc may instead be understood as the workings of culture confronted by a myth of its own production which is *expressly* composed of and refers to its epistemological limitations. The myth of Joan of Arc delineates the classifications upon which her transgressive identity depends even as it exceeds and denies the certain efficacy of their determination. In this sense, the relationship of her myth to the limits of epistemology precisely accords with that which Michel Foucault suggests for all transgression:

> "Perhaps it is like a flash of lightning in the night which, from the beginning of time, gives a dense and black intensity to the night it denies, which lights up the night from the inside, from top to bottom, and yet owes to the dark the stark clarity of its manifestation, its harrowing and poised singularity; the flash loses itself in this space it marks with its sovereignty and becomes silent now that it has given a name to obscurity."[1]

The consistency of the Joan figure's mythic formulation and the fluid ambiguousness of its assumed "meanings," which are invented anew at each retelling of her story and yet never secured, never rendered definitive, evidence the polysemy which is the life-blood of myth. If there is one consistent characteristic of *mythe-allégorie*, it is that it is ever failing to contain that which it describes and yet is at the same time concerned with the expression of that very

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[1] "A Preface to Transgression" in Foucault, 1977, p.35.

failure. It is this failure to contain or present any absolute, fully-articulated meaning which finds signification in Joan's transgressive identity. Her myth is a demonstration with guidelines but no definite instructions; it presents Joan of Arc to us, it tells us that we must read her, but it does not tell us how we are to do so. This is what makes it so compelling to the imagination, so vibrantly alive. This is not to say, of course, that the transgressive Joan of Arc signifies nothing meaningful; the point is rather that it represents that which is essentially, inevitably, necessarily, indefinable. It is this elusiveness of singular, fixed, and absolute meanings that the polysemy of the mythic discourse is dedicated to. In her mythic incarnation, Joan of Arc becomes the embodiment of that which cannot be embodied, a spectre which is fleetingly captured in the same instant that it eludes us.

2. The *mythe-mensonge*

The "deceitful myth" or *mythe-mensonge* is the proper subject of Barthes' *Mythologies*. The *mythe-mensonge* is not properly myth at all; it is a derivative of myth, an example of cynical myth-making, a motivated abuse of the mythic discourse. It represents the colonisation of myth by ideology and its function is not to suggest but to *persuade*. Myth's uncommitted polysemy, its structures, symbolism, archetypes, and gestures are seized by ideology and dedicated to a purpose which is apposite to myth. Where the *mythe-allégorie* formulates epistemological questions, the *mythe-mensonge* proffers ideological explanations and answers; it effaces myth's articulation of uncertainty and instead proposes definitive solutions. Behind the *mythe-mensonge* there is always, as Barthes points out, an implied motivation and an implied "author." The dynamic, meaning-producing relation between the mythic discourse and its "reader" is skewed in favour of ideology as it freezes myth's polysemy into its own rigid prescriptions; the "reader" is invoked as a "receiver" (as the term "invoked" suggests, this reduction of the "reader" to the status of "receiver" is the apparent discursive intent; whether or not it is successful is, of course, another matter entirely). The mythic *process* appears to cease and the *mythe-mensonge* ostensibly has a self-contained, stable, and discrete form which assumes authority over any variants, presenting itself as

definitive (this aspect of authoritative completion and fixedness, this murder of myth's polysemy and process in the "final pronouncement" which is the *mythe-mensonge*, does *not* occur in fact, as we shall see, but it *seems* to occur).

The principle difference between the *mythe-allégorie* and the *mythe-mensonge* lies in their respective ideological operations. All myth is unavoidably "ideological," in the most general sense, for the simple reason that ideology is an inescapable aspect of the human imagination. Through the discursive medium of the *myth-allégorie*, ideology is brought to bear upon the mythic subject itself in the act of "reading" or "writing" the mythic "text." The polysemy of the *mythe-allégorie* accommodates and invites a variety of ideological interpretations but -- crucially -- it does not itself produce or confirm any single ideological reading. It does not represent an attempt to *persuade* its "reader" to adopt any *particular* ideological viewpoint in preference to another; it receives, rather than disseminates, ideology. In this respect, the *mythe-mensonge* is the very opposite of the *mythe-allégorie*; its whole substance is ideological and its whole purpose is to persuade of and disseminate its ideological content. The *mythe-mensonge* emanates ideology, projecting it onto and into the world-at-large.

Either one or the other of these ideological operations dominates in each of the variants of the myth of Joan of Arc that we have considered in this study. Where her story has been treated as *mythe-allégorie* in fiction, where ideology has been brought to bear upon the mythic Joan of Arc it has been done so in order to render her story intelligible, to assimilate it into a wider ideological and epistemological sense of order and meaning. In Shaw's *Saint Joan*, for example, nationalism and Protestantism are invoked for the purpose of 'explaining' Joan; Joan is not used to disseminate nationalist or Protestant ideologies. The play itself works towards a conclusion which acknowledges her intransigence, her persistent and troublesome social "unreadability," and can accommodate her only outside the world, at the level of metaphysics (metaphysics and transcendence often constitute a "get-out clause" where Joan is concerned, making safe the failure epistemologically to contain her). Usually, however, the ideologies imported into Joan's myth are less well-defined; as we have seen,

they include notions about gender, about religious faith, about the relations between the individual, the society to which the individual belongs, and the competency of the State which oversees and governs that relationship. This operation -- in which ideology is present as an inherent aspect of epistemological and discursive processes -- is distinct in Carl Dreyer's *The Passion of Joan of Arc*, wherein the integrity of the individual is explored in antagonistic relation to the prescriptions of authority. In the *mythe-allégorie*, then, "ideology" functions on two interrelated levels. On the one hand, it serves as a means of making sense of the transgressive Joan of Arc; on the other hand, the myth of Joan of Arc functions as a discursive device through which ideologically-informed epistemological notions and problems are addressed.

In the *mythe-mensonge*, ideological dissemination is the *whole motive* for the reiteration of Joan's story. Joan is invoked and textually constructed in such a way as to persuade the "reader" or "receiver" of a particular ideological concept. In Gustav Ucicky's *Das Mädchen Johanna*, the ideological purpose is explicit; the film constructs Joan as an early incarnation of Hitler and relates her story as a sort of holy, medieval version of *Mein Kampf*. Joan's story becomes an instrument of Nazi mythopoesis, of its mythologization of its own ideologies. Certain aspects of her *mythe-allégorie* are downplayed or excluded; others, more consonant with the aims and ideals of Nazism, are foregrounded and recast. Joan's identification as a charismatic ideologue possessed by an overwhelming sense of mission and dedicated to its realization is stressed. The patriotic nature of this mission obviously lends itself to nationalistic interpretation -- a fact which various representatives and organizations of the Far Right, from Charles Maurras and the *Action Française* to Jean-Marie Le Pen and *Le Front National*, have recognized and used. The pastoral aspects of Joan's story feed into the romantic-conservative *Völkisch* notion of a medieval golden age that the Nazis dedicated themselves to re-establishing (see Figure 9, p.198). The theme of betrayal in Joan's story is of central importance to its "Nazification." Nazi heroes were never defeated honourably but instead were overcome as a result of betrayal; this was the mythical Siegfried's fate and, in

Figure 9. Angela Salloker in Ucicky's *Das Mädchen Johanna* (1935).

(BFI Stills, Posters, and Designs)

another right-wing *mythe-mensonge*, it resurfaces as the "stab in the back" alibi used to explain Germany's defeat in 1918.[1]

In Ucicky's film, Joan is claimed for a Nazi pantheon of mythic or mythologised heroes which also includes Siegfried, Frederick the Great, and, of course, Herr Hitler, and she is claimed expressly in order to "sell" Nazism to the French. But this "reading" of Joan of Arc, although not exactly a misreading since it finds some small justification in her story, nevertheless effects a wilful deceit by isolating certain aspects of Joan's story and twisting them so that they conform to the ideological profile of National Socialism. It is an excellent example of a *mythe-mensonge*, of ideology masquerading as myth; it perpetuates a deceit not through outright invention but rather through a distortion of the familiar. It excludes or steam-rolls or warps everything that does not accord with its ideological schema. Unlike Hitler, Joan – in myth as in life – demonstrates no predilection either for genocide or for world-domination; the target against which she aims her righteous nationalism is an invading army, not peaceful neighbouring countries or minority groups resident in France. Joan's transgressiveness is, naturally, rather undesirable from a Nazi point of view; if Hitler enjoyed dressing up in the clothes of the opposite sex, he was careful to keep it to himself. And so the transgressive, fluid substance of the mythic Joan figure is cast out and replaced by ideology; she becomes like the robot simulacrum in Fritz Lang's *Metropolis*, a likeness without substance, servant to her evil master.

Nazism's translation of the Joan myth into pure propaganda is undoubtedly the most extreme and cynical example of *mythe-mensonge* in action, but there are a number of other instances in which Joan's myth is hijacked by a prefigured ideological schema. Bertolt Brecht invokes her as a trope in a Marxist parable in his plays *Saint Joan of the Stockyards* and *The Trial of Joan of Arc at Rouen, 1431*. In the former of the two plays, Joan's history is abandoned altogether in order to interrogate the romantic notion of the heroic individual and to propose in its place a socialist notion of social identity and solidarity. In the latter play, Joan is reconstructed as a historical figure but she performs much the same ideological

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[1] See Henry Hatfield, "The Myth of Nazism," in Murray (ed.), 1969, p.210.

function; her fate is linked to that of the common people, from whom she gets her inner strength and for whom her martyrdom speaks. Robert Bresson's *The Trial of Joan of Arc* also qualifies as a *mythe-mensonge*, although here the ideological project is not political but religious. Again, the Joan figure is not a subject in its own right but rather is used to convey an ideologised (Catholic, dualistic, ascetic) sense of the Transcendent. To this purpose, the film's mythic subject is subordinated to hieratic formalism, to an excessively rigorous orchestration of aesthetics and narrative structure which predicates how the text is to be read. As Susan Sontag astutely remarks, "Bresson's Jeanne is an automaton of grace."[1]

In each of the latter examples, the ideological motive precedes and effects the selection of Joan of Arc as the instrument of its expression. The Joan myth is seized upon and colonised by ideology. It is the essential "undecidability"[2] of the Joan figure, its non-compliance with the fixed, binaric arrangements of epistemology, which makes it so accommodating of ideologies which are at the same time alien to its polysemic ambiguousness. This quality of "undecidability" is central to Joan's adoption as the subject of both *mythe-allégorie* and *mythe-mensonge*. As Joan's gender transgression transforms the option of *either* male *or* female into a statement of *neither* male *nor* female, so too do the multifarious paradoxes, dilemmas, and ambiguities suggested by her story disallow the claims of any *single* ideological interpretation by allowing *many* such interpretations. Joan of Arc can represent Protestantism as well as Catholicism, a witch as well as a saint, an autocrat as well as an outlaw, tradition as well as revolution, the masculine principle as well as the feminine, the oppressive establishment as well as the oppressed individual, Marxism as well as Nazism, because her mythologised identity seems to encode or accommodate all of these in part and none of them exclusively or in full.

Every interpretation of her -- including those belonging to the order of the *mythe-mensonge* -- ultimately serves only to evidence the extraordinary polysemy of the Joan myth.

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[1] "Spiritual Style in the Films of Robert Bresson" in Sontag, 1994, pp187-188.
[2] I have stolen this useful term from Derrida.

In this sense, even the *mythe-mensonge* constructions of Joan of Arc participate in the wider mythic discourse, providing yet more instances of polysemic interpretation. Paradoxically, the more Joan of Arc is defined the more apparent are her ambiguities and the less definable she becomes; each attempt to establish and secure her specificity only renders her more fluid, more universal, and more adaptable. Almost every attempt to "read" the Joan figure has involved some sabotage of its transgressive substance; her transgressions are looked *through* rather than *at* as she is rendered transparent in order that she may then be rendered intelligible. And yet she remains essentially unintelligible since, as Foucault has observed, "it is likely that transgression has its entire space in the line it crosses."[1] That is to say, the meaning and form of the mythic Joan figure describe, and are described by, its transgressive substance rather than by that which lies in those categories between which it moves fluidly without ever surrendering itself. It is transgression itself which, far from concealing her, reveals her. But this quality of transgression is not the property or construction of any single interpretation of Joan, of any single example of either the *mythe-allégorie* or its sinister imposter the *mythe-mensonge*. Rather, it is a quality of the Joan myth as a discursive operation wherein each mythic instance, each "text," is only a constituent element. The full presence of the mythic Joan figure is always sited beyond epistemological containment. We are compelled to observe the mythic Joan figure, like Derrida's ambivalent *pharmakon*, "infinitely promise itself and endlessly vanish through concealed doorways that shine like mirrors and open onto a labyrinth."[2]

Every fictional variant of the Joan of Arc myth has required the polysemic potential of her transgressiveness in order to read its own concerns into her, and she is selected as a subject for fiction for this very reason. And yet in almost every one of these variants her transgressiveness is hurriedly explained away even as it is deployed as a signifier of her transcendence of her own female humanity. Of the texts we have considered, only Carl Dreyer's *The Passion of Joan of Arc* demonstrates enough bravery and insight to represent the mythic Joan figure without attempting to contain, explain, or justify its epistemological

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[1] "A Preface to Transgression," in Foucault, 1977, p.34.
[2] Jacques Derrida, *Dissemination*, trans. Barbara Johnson, (London: Athlone Press, 1981), p.128.

ambiguities. What is manifestly clear is that the myth of Joan of Arc both extends far beyond any single utterance of its substance and speaks its meanings through the multiplicity and diversity of the texts in which it is invoked and involved. For it is this diversity of inspiration which also speaks the myth of Joan of Arc, which demonstrates its polysemy and ambiguousness, its uncontainability, its defiance of human ordering and challenge to the limits of epistemology, its proximity to the transcendent which, like transgression, exists outside the competence of epistemology and which finds its expression only in those metaphors which articulate epistemological failure. To this body of myth, this study is but another contribution, another way of "reading" of the mythic Joan figure. Which is, of course, the point.

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FILMOGRAPHY

FILMS ABOUT JOAN OF ARC:

Fémina* or *Destinées (Love, Soldiers, and Women)*, Part Two, *Jeanne

Dir. Jean Dellanoy. Franco-London Film/ Continental Produzione, 1954. France-Italy.

Starring Michèle Morgan (Joan), Andrée Clément, Robert Dalban, Jacques Fabre.

Second part of a film comprised of three separate sketches about women, representing Faith, Hope, and Chastity. Parts One and Three are *Lysistrata* (dir. Christian-Jaque) and *Elisabeth* (dir. Marcello Pagliero). Set just before Joan rides on Compiègne, where she is destined to be captured, the film relates an episode in which she miraculously restores a dead baby to life for long enough for it to be baptised. Focuses upon Joan's reluctance to play the role of popular heroine and miracle-worker and upon her abandonment by many of her soldiers. Michèle Morgan is a convincingly pragmatic and driven Joan, tough and earthily androgynous in her rough soldier's outfit and bravely sporting a severe pudding-bowl haircut.

Giovanna d'Arco al Rogo (Joan of Arc at the Stake)

Dir. Roberto Rossellini. Franco-London Film/ Cinematgrafici Associati/ PCA, 1954. France-Italy.

Starring Ingrid Bergman (Joan), Tullio Carminati (Saint Dominic), Giancinto Prandelli (Porcus/ Cochon).

Closely based upon Paul Claudel and Arthur Honegger's oratorio *Jeanne au bûcher.* Highly stylised and operatic version of Joan's story, in which she returns in spirit form, accompanied by Saint Dominic, to review the major events of her life in order to come to terms with them. The film emphasises the miraculous. Bergman portrays Joan as overwrought, confused, and anxious, posthumously seeking to understand God's purpose in her earlier career, persecution, and death.

Jeanne d'Arc

Dir. Georges Hatot. Pathé, 1898. France.

Earliest known film about Joan of Arc. No surviving print.

"First documented film attempt, part of a series of short films on historical subjects, now of primarily scholarly interest, since Hatot was one of the first filmmakers to orient films towards definite, serious subjects, and thereby influenced Lumière and others." (Margolis, 1990, p.397).

Jeanne d'Arc

Dir. Georges Méliès. Star Films, 1898/99. France.

Starring: Louise 'Jehanne' d'Alcy (Joan).

Colour-tinted 15-minute film comprised of 12 tableaux depicting the major scenes of Joan's life from Domrémy to her martyrdom, in overtly theatrical settings. Joan's visions are shown in the form of angels. The last scene shows Joan ascending to heaven amidst tiers of clouds upon which are angels playing harps and cellos. The film was believed lost until its rediscovery in 1982. Copies are now held at the Centre Jeanne d'Arc at Orléans and Le Centre National de la Cinématographie, Archives du Films, at Bois d'Arcy.

Jeanne la Pucelle

Dir. Jacques Rivette. Pierre Grise Productions/ La Sept Cinéma/ France 3 Cinéma/ Canal Plus/ Centre Nationale de la Cinématographie. 1994. France.

Starring: Sandrine Bonnaire (Joan), Olivier Cruveiller, André Marcon, Jean-Pierre Lorit, Michael Goldman, Alain Olivier.

Epic five-and-a-half hour production, doomed to box-office failure by its length and subsequently released in two parts -- Part One, *Les Batailles* and Part Two, *Les Prisons*. According to the eminent French medieval historian Georges Duby, it is the most historically

accurate film of Joan's life ever made. Begins in 1455 with a statement by Isabelle Romée, Joan's mother, then picks up Joan's story as, twenty-five years earlier, she waits outside Robert de Baudricourt's castle at Vaucouleurs. Throughout the film, the narrative is intercut with testimony from the rehabilitation trial, delivered by solitary witnesses who address the camera. Bonnaire, well-known for her feminist views and general rebelliousness, plays Joan as a tough, self-confident individualist, an assertive and determined idealist who is virtuous without being a goody-goody. Women other than Joan figure more prominently and play more active roles than they do in other versions of her story. Despite its daunting length, Rivette's film is exciting, thoughtful, and moving in equal measure.The scene of Joan's martyrdom achieves considerable emotional impact through exemplary understatement.

Joan of Arc

Dir. Victor Fleming. RKO. 1948. USA.

Screenplay: Maxwell Anderson and Andrew Solt. Religious advisor: R.P. Doncœur.

Starring: Ingrid Bergman (Joan), José Ferrer (Charles VII), Francis. L. Sullivan (Cauchon), Gene Lockhart, Ward Bond.

Based on Maxwell Anderson's play *Joan of Lorraine* (1946), in which Bergman also played Joan. Spectacular technicolour Hollywood production, picking up Joan's story at the start of her trial and relating her earlier life and career in a long flashback before returning to her trial and martyrdom. Joan is portrayed as a simple, modest, and devout countrygirl whose high ideals are betrayed by the weak-willed Charles VII and who falls victim to the scheming villainy of Cauchon. Repeated use of a male narrator to fill in the historical gaps and contextualize events.

Joan the Woman

Dir. Cecil B. De Mille. Cardinal, 1916/ Paramount, 1917. USA.

Starring: Geraldine Farrar (Joan), Raymond Hatton, Wallace Reid.

Spectacular epic with a cast of thousands, partly in colour. Opens with an intertitle stating that it is a "great historical film" and further intertitles which detail the historical background to Joan's story. Relates Joan's story from Domrémy to her martyrdom, intercutting the narrative with footage from the First World War. Joan's visions are represented in the form of shining, winged angels accompanied by bright light. For the martyrdom scene, a reconstruction of the market-square at Rouen was transformed into an enormous pyre. The final shot of the film shows a figure asleep on the floor and having a dream about Joan -- a device which ties in with the war footage to give Joan's story a contemporary relevance.

Das Mädchen Johanna (Joan the Maid)

Dir. Gustav Ucicky. Ufa. 1935. Germany.

Starring: Angela Salloker (Joan), Gustaf Gründgens, Heinrich George, Paul Bildt.

No surviving print.

Nationalistic, vehemently anti-English production approved of by Goebbels and apparently released with the intention of encouraging French sympathy for Nazi Germany by presenting Joan as a prototype Hitler.

"This would have been quite an event if the Schiller play had been the basis for the film, but Gerhard Menzel's screenplay made it appear that Joan was no more than an earlier edition of Hitler, or, as the programme obliquely puts it, 'a leader who saved her people from despair'. To hear Hitler's slogans coming from the mouth of a Saint of the Roman Catholic Church was too much for many of the international audience. Nonetheless, the production was subsequently shown widely abroad as an example of the quality of German film, and the political message passed serenely over most viewers' heads." David Stewart Hull, *Film in the Third Reich* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1969), p.73.

La Merveilleuse Vie de Jeanne d'Arc

Dir. Marco de Gastyne. Aubert Natan. 1928. France.

Screenplay: Jean-José Frappa.

Starring: Simone Genevois (Joan), Philippe Hériat, Jean Toulout, Gaston Modot.

Lavish production made by de Gastyne with a crew of only four people. Relates Joan's story from Domrémy to her martyrdom at Rouen. Simone Genevois portrays a charismatic Joan, bold and androgynous, and convincingly represents both Joan's physical energy and a more spiritual and contemplative side to her character. Coronation scene filmed at Rheims Cathedral, for which de Gastyne got special permission temporarily to remove the statue of Joan that stands outside it. The film makes much of Joan's identification with an idealised rural France and emphasises her horror at the bloodiness of battle.

La Passion de Jeanne d'Arc (The Passion of Joan of Arc)

Dir. Carl-Theodor Dreyer. Société Générale de Films, 1928. France.

Screenplay: Carl Dreyer, Joseph Delteil. Historical advisor: Pierre Champion. Set design: Hermann Warm.

Starring: Renée Falconetti (Joan), Eugène Sylvain (Cauchon), Maurice Schultz (Loyseleur), Antonin Artaud (Massieu).

Originally based upon Delteil's flowery and sentimental biography *Joan of Arc*; Dreyer retained Delteil's name in the film's credit titles but rewrote almost all of the screenplay, closely following the original trial transcripts. The film is entirely concerned with Joan's trial and martyrdom and was made with a huge budget of 9 million francs. Filmed at the old Renault factory at Billancourt, with sets designed by Hermann Warm, best known for his work on *The Cabinet of Dr. Caligari* (1919). Hugely innovative and influential and generally regarded as a masterpiece, Dreyer's film is noted for its extensive use of close-ups and radical disruptions of spatial and temporal continuity. Only film performance by the great Falconetti.

Le Procès de Jeanne d'Arc (The Trial of Joan of Arc)

Dir. Robert Bresson. Agnès Delahaie/ Pathé, 1961/62. France.

Starring: Florence Carrez (Joan), Jean-Claude Fourneau (Cauchon), Richard Pratt (Warwick).

Austere reconstruction of Joan's trial with dialogue closely based upon the original trial records. Uses sparse settings and plain costumes and avoids historical references in order to remove Joan from history and foreground the timeless, spiritual aspects of her story. Carrez plays an ascetic, iconic Joan, whom the film strongly associates with Christ.

Saint Joan

Dir. R. Widgey Newman. De Forest Phono Films, 1927.

Starring: Sybil Thorndike (Joan).

"A 5-min sound production devoted to the cathedral scene with Thorndike, age 41, playing Joan." (Margolis, 1990, p.399).

Saint Joan

Dir. Otto Preminger. United Artists, 1957. USA.

Starring: Jean Seberg (Joan), Richard Widmark (Charles VII), Richard Todd (Dunois), Anton Walbrook (Cauchon), John Gielgud (Warwick).

Big-budget Hollywood production with an all-star cast, based upon Shaw's *Saint Joan*. Controversial screenplay by Graham Greene, who was accused by some critics of having 'Catholicized' Shaw's play -- a claim which Greene vigorously denied. The unknown Jean Seberg became popularly regarded as the personification of Joan, bringing a quality of youthful, ethereally androgynous beauty to the role.

St. Joan

Dir. Stephen Rumbelow. Triple Action Films and East Midlands Arts Association. 1977. UK.

Starring Monica Buferd (Joan).

Low-budget production, made for four thousand pounds. "In this version, Monica Buferd in the title role puts on a Hitler moustache and cap to stress the director's vision of Joan as a proto-fascist." (Warner, 1993, p.331).

FILMS WHICH REFERENCE JOAN OF ARC:

Between Us Girls

Dir. Henry Koster. Universal, 1942.

Starring: Diane Barrymore, Robert Cummings.

Film in which an actress who plays Joan and other women on stage becomes over-identified with her characters and fails to notice that she has an ardent admirer.

Joan of Ozark

Dir. Joseph Santly. Republic. 1942. USA.

Starring: Judy Canova, Joe E. Brown.

"Most likely the silliest representation of J' in film." (Margolis, 1990, p.401).

Joan of Paris

Dir. Robert Stevenson. RKO. 1942. USA.

Starring Michèle Morgan, Alan Ladd, Paul Henried.

Morgan plays a young woman in Occupied France who regards Joan as her patron saint and risks her life to save British pilots from the Nazis.

Johanna D'Arc of Mongolia

Dir. Ulrike Ottinger. Ulrike Ottinger Filmproduktion, 1989. W. Germany.

Starring: Xu Re Huar, Delphine Seyrig, Irm Hermann, Ines Sastre, Gillian Scalici.

A group of western women travelling by train across Mongolia are kidnapped by a Mongolian princess and her band of Amazons and embark upon a surreal, lesbian adventure.

The Miracle of the Bells

Dir. Irving Pichel. RKO, 1948. USA.

Starring: Alida Valli, Frank Sinatra, Fred MacMurray.

Sentimental dirge about a Polish factory-girl from Pennsylvania who is given the lead in a film about Joan of Arc. She becomes ill while making the film and dies when it is completed. Her publicity-seeking agent takes her body back to the mining-town she comes from and, after a memorial service, an earth tremor causes the church bells to ring.

Nachalo (The Debut/The Girl from the Factory)

Dir. Gleb Anatolevich Panfilov. Studio Len Film. 1971. USSR.

Starring: Inna Churikova (Joan).

Comedy about a young factory-girl who is given the lead role in a film about Joan of Arc. "Panfilovian theme of life imitating art, becoming ennobled by it....." (Margolis, 1990, p.400).

Sheltered Daughters

Dir. Edward Dillon. Realart. 1921. USA.

Starring: Justine Johnstone.

"Heroine, daughter of overbearing police sgt., attempting to emulate J', unwittingly aids French soldier, a swindler pretending to collect money for orphans. J' symbol of girlish innocence vs. cruel world." (Margolis, 1990, p.395).

The Story of Mankind

Dir. Irwin Allen. Warner Bros. 1957. USA.

Starring Hedy Lamarr (Joan).

"Lamarr, though miscast, gives a very blond, etheral J'. Entire film a failed comedic hodge-podge despite many familiar names....." (Margolis, 1990, p.393).

Vivre sa vie (My Life to Live)

Dir. Jean-Luc Godard. Films de la Pléiade. 1962. France.

Starring: Anna Karina.

Karina plays Nana, a young woman who becomes a prostitute. The narrative is broken up into twelve separate episodes, each introduced by long titles detailing the events that they describe. In Episode III, Nana goes to the cinema and weeps as she watches Dreyer's *The Passion of Joan Of Arc*. The film ends with Nana's death in an unexplained gun battle which occurs after her pimp, Raoul, sells her to another pimp.

OTHER FILMS CITED:

The Gospel According to St. Matthew (Il Vangelo Secondo Matteo)

Dir. Pier Paolo Pasolini. Arco Film/ Lux Compagnie Cinématographique de France. 1964. France-Italy.

Starring: Enrique Irazoqui (Jesus), Margherita Caruso (Mary as a girl), Susanna Pasolini (Mary as a woman), Marcello Morante (Joseph)

Filmed in the barren landscapes of Calabria. Closely follows the Gospel account of Christ's life, but manages to insert a Marxist subtext by emphasising Christ's fury at the social injustices he encounters.

The Last Temptation of Christ

Dir. Martin Scorcese. Universal Pictures/ Cineplex Odeon Films. 1988. USA/ Canada.

Script: Paul Schrader.

Starring: Willem Dafoe (Christ), Harvey Keitel (Judas), David Bowie (Pontius Pilate), Barbara Hershey (Mary Magdalene).

Controversial film of Christ's late life, based on Nikos Kazantzakis' equally controversial novel of the same name. Portrays Christ as a tormented man, torn between the demands of

destiny and his longing to lead an ordinary life. Portrayal of his relationship with Mary Magdalene prompted some countries to ban the film from being shown.

The Seventh Seal (Det Sjunde Inseglet)

Dir. Ingmar Bergman. Swensk Filmindustri. 1957. Sweden.

Starring: Max von Sydow (Antonius Blok), Nils Poppe (Jof), Bibi Andersson (Mia).

Allegorical tale of a knight -- Antonius Blok -- who returns from the Crusades to find his homeland ravaged by plague and his countrymen given over to barbarism. In an attempt to win more time in order to find meaning in his life before he dies, he challenges Death to a game of chess.

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